

THE
ADVENTURES
OF
HUGH TREVOR.

BY THOMAS HOLCROFT.

— 'TIS SO FAT TO ALL THE TRIBE
EACH CRIES THAT WAS LEVELLED AT ME.
GAY.

VOLUME VI.

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CHAP. I

THE NEW AND OLD TESTAMENTS
EDITED BY W. E. GLAZIER
HARVARD THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
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THE
ADVENTURES
OF
HUGH TREVOR.

CHAP. I.

A NEW AND BOLD PROJECT CONCEIVED AND EXECUTED BY WAKEFIELD. THE DIFFICULTY OF MAKING PRINCIPLES AGREE WITH PRACTICE DISCUSSED. FAIR PROMISES ON THE PART OF AN OLD OFFENDER, THE HOPES THEY EXCITE AND THE FEARS THAT ACCOMPANY THEM.

THE affair of the pamphlet being removed from my mind, I had leisure to attend to the other difficulty that had lately crossed me; by the possession which Wakefield had illegally taken of effects which he asserted to be his, in the double right of being heir to his uncle and the husband of my mother, but which, if my information were true, appertained to me.

VOL. VI.

B

It

It may well be supposed I communicated all my thoughts to friends like Evelyn, Wilmot, and Turl; and endeavoured to profit by their advice.

Law had lately undergone a serious examination from us all; and it was then the general opinion among us that, though it was impossible to avoid appealing to it on some occasions, yet nothing but the most urgent cases could justify such appeals. Enquiries that were to be regulated, not by a spirit of justice but by the disputatious temper of men whose trade it was to deceive, and by statutes and precedents which they might or might not remember, and which, though they might equivocally and partially apply in some points, in others had no resemblance, such enquiries ought not lightly to be instituted. Neither ought the habitual vices which they engender, both in lawyer and client, nor the miseries they inflict, upon the latter
in

in particular, and by their consequences upon all society, to be promoted.

In the course of the conversation at the tavern, when I dined and spent the afternoon with the false Belmont, this subject among others had occurred. Having told him that I had quitted all thoughts of the law, he enquired into my motives; and, being full of the subject and zealous to detail its whole iniquity, I not only urged the reasons that most militate against it both in principle and practice, but, in the warmth of argument, declared that I doubted whether any man could bring an action against another without being guilty of injustice. I considered crime and error as the same. The structure of law I argued was erroneous, therefore criminal; and I protested against the attempting to redress a wrong, already committed, by the commission of more wrong.

The death of Thornby happened im-

B 2

mediately

mediately after this conversation took place ; and it is not to be supposed that a man like my young but inventive father-in-law could forget, or fail in endeavouring to profit by, such an incident.

One morning while at breakfast, I received a note from him, signed Belmont ; in which he requested me again to dine and spend the afternoon with him : alleging that an event had taken place in which he was deeply interested : adding that he had been lately led to reflect on many of the remarks I had made ; and that he hoped the period was come when he should be able to change the system to which I was so inimical, for one that better agreed with my own sentiments : but that my advice was particularly necessary, on the present occasion.

The note gave me pleasure. That a man with such powers of mind, and charms of conversation, should have only a chance of changing, from what he was
to

to what I hoped, was delightful. And that he should call upon me for advice, at such a juncture, was flattering.

I answered that an engagement already formed prevented me from meeting him, on that day: but I appointed the next morning for an interview. Dining I declined; as a hint that I disapproved the attempt he had made to entrap me.

The engagement I had was to accompany Lady Bray, to one of the families acquainted with the Mowbrays; and where it was expected we should meet Olivia, and her aunt. This expectation, which kept my spirits in a flutter the whole day and increased to alarm and dread in the evening, was disappointed. Whether from any real or a pretended accident on the part of the aunt, who sent an apology, was more than I had an opportunity to know.

I kept my appointment, on the following morning; and was rather surprised,

when we met, at perceiving that the still pretended Belmont, like myself, was in deep mourning. I began to make enquiries, to which he gave short answers ; and, turning the interrogatories upon me, asked which of my relations was dead ?”

“ My mother.”

“ Oh : I remember. Mrs. Wakefield. Are you still as angry with her husband as ever ?”

“ I really cannot tell. Though I have what most people would think much greater cause.”

“ Indeed ! What has he done more ?”

“ Taken possession of property which is mine.”

“ By what right is it yours ?”

“ It was bequeathed me by my grandfather ; and since that by his executor.”

“ The uncle of this Wakefield, I think you told me ?”

“ Yes. A lawyer. One Thornby ; who was induced by death-bed terrors to restore

restore what he had robbed me of while living."

"That is, he lived a knave, and died a fool and a fanatic."

"I suspect that he died as he had lived. Knavery and fanaticism are frequently coupled."

"And how do you intend to proceed?"

"I do not know. I have not yet consulted a lawyer."

"Consulted a lawyer? You surprise me! When last I saw you, I was half-convinced by you that a man cannot justly seek redress at law. Its sources you proved to be corrupt, its powers inadequate, and its decisions never accurate; therefore never just. This was your language. You reprobated those accommodating rules by which I endeavoured to obtain happiness; and urged arguments that made a deep impression upon me. Now that self-interest gives you an impulse, are your principles become as

pliant as mine; which you so seriously reproved?"

I paused, and then replied—"I imagine you take some delight in having found an opportunity of retorting upon me; and of laughing at what you still consider as folly."

"Indeed you mistake. I hope by reminding you of your own doctrine to induce you to put it in practice. The virtue that consists only in words is but a vapour."

"Surely you will allow this is an extreme if not a doubtful case. I do not mean to commence an action, till I have considered it very seriously: but I presume you do not require infallibility of me? Or, if you do, it is what I cannot expect from myself. I have frequently been led to doubt whether principles the most indubitable must not bend to the mistakes and institutions of society. This doubt is to me the most painful that can
cross

cross the mind : but it is one from which I cannot wholly escape."

"Your tone I find is greatly altered. How strenuous, how firm, how founded, were all your maxims; when last we met."

"And so, I am persuaded, the maxims of truth will always remain."

"Then why depart from them? Another of them, which I likewise recollect to have heard from you, is that the laws which pretend to regulate property, whether by will, entail, or any other descent, are all unjust : for that effects of all kinds should be so appropriated as to produce the greatest good."

"I do not see how that can be denied. But this is strongly to the point in my favour, as I suppose : for the institutes of society render the application of the principle impracticable; and therefore I think the property may have a greater chance of being applied to a good purpose, if

allotted to me, than if retained by this Wakefield; whose vices are extraordinary."

"You believe him to be a man of some talent?"

"All that know him affirm his understanding would be of the first order, were it worthily employed."

"Then would it not be a good application of the property in contest, if it should both enable and induce him so to employ his understanding?"

"Oh, of that there is no hope."

"How do you know? I believe you have thought the same of me: but you may chance to be mistaken. And now I will tell you a secret. I am in the very predicament of this Wakefield. A relation is dead, who has left his property away from me: by what right is more than I can discover; at least in the spirit of those laws which pretend to regulate such matters: for their spirit is force,

Lands

Lands wrested from the helpless they consign to the robber. I am in possession; and doubt whether, even according to your code, I ought to resign. I certainly ought not according to my own. I will acknowledge to you that I think well of the man who claims the property I withhold. But I cannot think so well of him as of myself: for I cannot be so well acquainted with his thoughts as with my own. I know my own wants, my own powers, and my own plans. I should be glad to do him good, but I should be sorry to do myself ill. You accuse me of having fallen into erroneous habits, of making false calculations, and of tasting pleasures that are dangerous and of short duration. I have ridiculed your arguments: but I have not forgotten them. Neither has the enquiring spirit that is abroad been unknown to or unnoticed by me. Early powers of mind gave me the early means of indulgence. I revelled

in pleasure, squandered all I could procure, and was led by one successful artifice to another, till I became what I can certainly no otherwise justify than by the selfish spirit of the world. In this I find the rule is for each to seize on all that he can, with safety; and to swallow, hoard, or waste it at will. I have attempted to profit by vice which I knew not how to avoid. But, if there be a safer road to happiness, I am no idiot: I am as desirous of pursuing it as you can be. The respect of the world, the security from pains and penalties, and the approbation of my own heart, are all of them as dear to me as to you. I have thought much, have had much experience, and have the power of comparing facts and sensations as largely perhaps as another.

“I will not deny that to trick selfishness by its own arts, to laugh at its stupidity, and to outwit its contemptible cunning, are practices that have tickled my

my vanity ; and have perhaps formed one of my chief sources of pleasure. But habit and pleasure led me to extend such projects ; and to prey upon the well-meaning, and the kind, with almost as much avidity as on those of an opposite character.

“ However, though I did not want plausible arguments in my own justification, I cannot affirm that my heart was wholly at ease. New thoughts have occurred, other prospects have been contemplated, and my dissatisfaction has increased. You cannot but have remarked that, in the course of human life, most men undergo more than one remarkable change. The sober man becomes a drunkard, the drunkard sober, and the spendthrift sometimes a rational economist : though perhaps more frequently a miser.

“ Yet, though I am disposed to alter
my

my conduct, supposing me to possess the means of bidding defiance to mankind, I have no inclination to subject myself to their neglect, their pity, or their scorn. Be it want of courage or want of wisdom, I have not an intention to shut myself out from society. If I may be admitted on fair and liberal terms, I am content: but, I honestly tell you, admitted I will be. I have shut the door of dependency upon myself, were I so inclined. Offices of trust would not be committed to me. And to live rejected, in poverty and wretchedness, pointed at and pretended to be despised by the knaves and fools with whom the world is filled, is a condition to which I will never submit.

“Consequently, the property of which I have possessed myself I am in either case determined to use every effort to keep. If I am suffered to keep it quietly, my present inclinations are what I have been describing.

describing. If contention must come, we must then have a trial of skill upon the opposite system."

I listened to this discourse, attentive to every sentence, anxious for the next, and agitated by various contradictory emotions. I saw the difficulties of the supposed case; and knew not what to answer, or what to advise. That a man like this should become what he seemed half to promise was a thought that consoled and expanded the heart. But that it should depend upon so improbable an event as that of another renouncing a claim, which the law gave him, to property in dispute, was a most painful alternative. My sensations were of hope suddenly kindled, and as suddenly killed.

After waiting some time without any reply from me, he added "Let us suppose, Mr. Trevor, a whimsical, or if you please a strange, coincidence between the man with whom you have been so angry
and

and myself. I mean Wakefield. What if he felt some of the sober propensities toward which I find a kind of a call in myself?"

"He is not to be trusted. In him it would be artifice : or at least nobody would believe it could be any thing else."

"Mark now what chance there is, in a world like this, for a man whom it has once deemed criminal to reform. Oppressed, insulted, and pursued by the good, what resource has he but to associate with the wicked?"

"He that, with the fairest seeming and the most specious pretences, affirming time after time that, though he had deceived before, he now was honest, he that shall yet again and again repeat his acts of infamy cannot complain, if no man should be willing to trust his happiness to such keeping."

"I find what I am to expect from you. The very same will be said of me."

"No :

"No: you have not been equally unprincipled, and vile."

"These are coarse or at least harsh terms. However, I take them to myself; and affirm that I have."

"How can you make such an affirmation? How do you know?"

"A man may calculate on probabilities; and this is a moment in which I do not wish to conceal the full estimate which I make of my own conduct from you. Being therefore, seriously and speaking to the best of my judgment, as culpable as Wakefield, let my course of life hereafter be what it will, I find I am to expect no credit for sincerity from you?"

"You do not know Wakefield."

"Neither it seems do you."

"There is something in your countenance, in your conversation, and in the free and undisguised honesty even of your vices, that a man like Wakefield cannot possess."

"Have

"Have you forgotten that, though I can be open and honest, I can be artful? Do you not remember billiards, hazard, and Bath?"

"Yes: but Wakefield would be incapable of the qualities of mind which you are now displaying. With you I feel myself in the company of a man of a perverted but a magnanimous spirit. With all your faults, I could hug you to my heart. But Wakefield! who made women and men alike his prey; to whose devilish arts the virtue and happiness of an amiable, I may say a charming, woman were sacrificed; and the life of one of the first of mankind was endangered; that he should resemble you, and especially that he should resemble you with your present inclinations, oh! would that were possible!"

"There is generosity in the wish. It denotes a power in you of allaying one of the most active fiends that torment mankind: the spirit of revenge."

"It

"It is a spirit I own to which I have been too subject; and which I could wish to exorcise for ever."

"Put it to the test. Let us suppose you should discover as much of promise in Wakefield as you imagine you do in me."

"I should then put *him* to the test. I should demand of him to repair the wrongs he has done Miss Wilmot!"

"What if you should find him already so disposed?"

"Impossible. Or if he were, it would be with some design!"

"Ay: perhaps a proposition that you should leave him quietly possessed of the disputed property."

"And, having obtained that, he would desert his second wife as he had done his first."

"There is some difference between a young woman and an old one. Beside, if your account be true, Mrs. Wakefield, though

though she was your mother, was very inferior to Miss Wilmot."

"You forget that he seduced this lady, and deserted her."

"I have heard or read of a man who, after being divorced even from a wife, became more passionately in love with her than ever."

"Wakefield is incapable of love."

"You frame to yourself a most black and deformed being of this Wakefield."

"And you suppose a degree of sympathy, between yourself and him, which cannot exist."

"Why not? His wit, person, and manners, I have heard you describe as winning."

"I only gave the picture which I had from an affectionate though a most injured woman."

"I recollect the story perfectly. When you repeated it, notwithstanding my railery, I was more moved than you had reason

reason to imagine. I am persuaded that Wakefield himself, had he listened to it, would have felt a few uneasy sensations."

"I fear, not."

"Why so? Is he made of materials totally different from other men? Dissect him, and I imagine you will find he has a heart."

"But of what quality?"

"Better than you at present seem to give him credit for."

"What grounds have you for thinking so favourably of him?"

"Very excellent. Don't be surprised. I know the man."

"Is it possible?"

"Where is the wonder? Knaves of other classes associate, and why should not gamblers?"

"It may be, then, you are deputed to speak in his behalf?"

"I wrote to you, and introduced this
conver-

conversation, for that very purpose. I know him as intimately as I can know any man. I would speak of him as of myself, of his defects as of my own, and I declare it as my opinion that, if he might be permitted to enjoy his uncle's property in peace, he would change his system. To this property he supposes he has the best claim. He is Thornby's heir at law; and, as to the manner in which the wealth he left was acquired, if a general inquisition were made into the original right to every species of property, he is persuaded that ninety-nine rich men in a hundred would be turned into the streets to beg."

"What you have related has greatly surprised me. You have pleaded and continue to plead his cause very powerfully: but have you no consideration for me? Granting all you have supposed in his favour possible, am I so situated as to justify a romantic renunciation of claims

which, if asserted, may aid me to accomplish my dearest hopes?

“To a man like you perhaps I could be contented to resign these claims. I need not say ‘perhaps’: I am certain I could, were I thoroughly persuaded you would forsake a life of artifice and plunder, and were I myself only concerned.

“But that is not the case. I have an object to accomplish so dear to my heart that it swallows up lesser considerations, and will not allow me to neglect any honest means by which it may be promoted. Wealth to me is indispensable; wealth that shall place me on a level with a rich and proud family with which I have to contend. I have an impulse such perhaps as you have never felt. There is a woman in the world, endowed with such qualities that to say I passionately love her is a most impotent expression of what I feel: for to tenderness and ardour of affection must be added
all

all that simplicity, purity, and grandeur of soul can inspire. To think of life without her is to think of a world sterile, desolate, and joyless : of a night to which day shall never succeed : and of existence arrested and chained in motionless despondency."

"Which might be very pitiful ; or very sublime : just as you please : but which would be very absurd."

"Granted : but this is the fever of my mind ; the disease to which, should my hopes be disappointed, I feel myself dangerously impelled."

"The interpretation of all which is, that, though you have discovered principles, which if pursued would secure to yourself and mankind in general certain happiness, and that though you can deal forth their dogmas and point out the path which others indubitably ought to take, yet, when your own passions are concerned, you act like the rest of the world.

world. And you do this, not blindly, as they do, but, with your eyes open; at the moment that you are reminded of your maxims, and acknowledge their truth."

"Your accusation is premature. I have hitherto done nothing more than express my feelings and my doubts."

"But these doubts, spurred on by these feelings, assure me that you will proceed against Wakefield."

"You may think yourself assured: I conceive myself to be uncertain. I would willingly condemn myself to great punishment, were it to promote any plan of the goodness of which there should be a conviction. I can even suppose cases in which I would not only devote my life, for that in comparison appears to be a trifle, but would resign the woman whom my soul adores. Sacrifices like these however cannot be expected on light occasions. The good to be obtained ought

to be evidently greater than the evil to be endured."

He paused a moment to collect his ideas, and then replied.

"If, Mr. Trevor, you are the man of that eminent virtue which I have sometimes thought you, and to which by your discourse to me you have certainly made very lofty pretensions, I would advise you to reflect on what I shall once more state. I know that this Wakefield, of whom you think so ill, and who has been quite as guilty as you have supposed, is now inclined to be a different man. I would have you consider, first, to whom does the property in justice belong? I think you will find that to be doubtful. Next, supposing it to be legally yours, may you not nevertheless be defrauded of it by law? And, lastly, appeal to your own principles, and ask yourself whether it be not better that you should have a chance of doing the good which you conceive would

○ would be done, by recovering such a man as Wakefield to that respect in society by which his talents might be well employed; or whether it can be consistent with your own sense of right to take methods which you acknowledge to be precarious, and unjust, in order to dispossess him and to appropriate that to yourself to which, if you are impartial, you will perhaps find it difficult to prove, even to your own satisfaction, that you have a clear and undoubted claim?"

Through this whole scene, instead of diverting my attention from the argument by gay raillery, witty allusions, or a recurrence to the depravity of man, and the practice of the world, he kept closely to the question, preserved the tone of earnest discussion, and, having uttered what I have last repeated, took his leave with that serious air which he had thus unexpectedly assumed, and maintained.

CHAP. II.

THE PLAN OF WAKEFIELD PURSUED, AND THE
HOPES AND FEARS OF AN AFFECTIONATE WO-
MAN. NEWS OF PHILIP. AN ARTLESS EXCUL-
PATORY TALE.

QUITTING the place, meditating on the scene that had passed, surprised at every part of it, at the interested manner of the man, at the intimate knowledge which he professed to have of Wakefield, at the promises and the threats which he appeared to make in his name, at the coincidence not only of their characters, if his account were true, but at their similar incidents of fortune and corresponding inclinations to reform, astonished while I recollected these various particulars, instead of returning immediately to my lodgings I called on Miss Wilmot.

When I came to the door, I had
scarcely

scarcely decided with myself whether it were advisable to relate what had passed to her, which as she was personally in question I thought myself bound to do whenever it could be done with safety ; or whether, if related at present, it might not excite hopes that would be disappointed, and anxieties prejudicial to her peace.

She no sooner saw me than she exclaimed—"I am very glad you are come, Mr. Trevor ! I have two unexpected affairs, on which I wish to consult you. One of them relates to myself ; and I will begin with that because you are not only concerned in it but are appealed to in a very remarkable manner. I have received two extraordinary letters ; by both of which I have been not a little affected. Pray read this first. It is from Mr. Wakefield. The promises it contains, the style it assumes, and the

appeal it makes, are so strange as to appear either like miracle or romance.

She then gave me a letter, and I read as follows.

“Should you imagine, Lydia, that because I have long forborn all intercourse with you I have forgotten you, be assured you are mistaken. I have treated you so shamefully, and deceived you so often, that I have little right to expect you should believe my professions, be moved by my intreaties, or remember me with any other feelings than those of hatred. Yet, to deal sincerely with you, this is what I do not expect. I have had such proofs of the kindness of your heart, and the strength of your affection, that my confidence is still entire.

“It is the more unshaken because my own intentions are direct: of which the plainness with which I shall deliver my thoughts will I imagine be some proof.

“I once

“ I once more repeat, I have behaved to you like a ——— Spare me the word. It is enough to recollect that I have been the thing. I could plead the extreme vivacity of my youth, my ungovernable passions, and the dangerous temptation of critical moments; but that I will not exhibit any feature of pitiful apology, or endeavour to extenuate what I cannot defend.

“ You are intimate with Mr. Trevor. You know that his mother, my late wife, is dead; and you have heard of a will, said to have been left by my uncle. I feel but little scruple in affirming that I imbibed many of the vices of my early youth from being placed under this uncle's care. That such a man should die like a coward, and endeavour to disinherit a relation to save his soul, supposing this disinheritance to be true, would be no miracle. It would only be an act of contemptible stupidity.

“I will not here enter into any enquiries of a legal kind : for I will be open enough to own that, being in possession both in right of my wife and as the heir of my uncle of the property he left, and determined as I am to assert my claims, which I think paramount to those of any other person, I will not commit myself even to you. On the contrary, I write this letter purposely that you may shew it to Mr. Trevor.

“You will ask my motive for this? and perhaps will be surprised at my answer.

“By certain whimsical accidents, I have become acquainted with Mr. Trevor's principles. I believe, or I rather know, him to be possessed of a heart and understanding equally excellent. I wish to appeal to them both. When he shall read this, he will have had a conversation relating to me ; which may have led him to expect the language I am about to use.

In

In an argument concerning property he cannot forget that he lately delivered himself thus :

“ If I strictly adhere to the principle of justice, I must not singly consider my own wishes ; which may create innumerable false wants, and crave to have them gratified. I must ask is there no being ; within my knowledge, who may be more benefited by the enjoyment of that which I am desirous to appropriate to myself than I can ? If so, what right have I to prefer self gratification to superior utility ? ”

“ Mine is a case in point.

“ Again ; property is left for which he may be induced to contend ; and which, should he do so, will probably be dissipated in law. If not, it may with no less probability be decided by law to be mine. He affirms that to contend at law is immoral.

“ Do you and he listen to what I have now to say.

"I am desirous of totally changing my conduct. I have a heart more capable of affection than you, Lydia, have reason to suppose; and I love you. My ambition at present is to do you much more good than I have ever done you harm. I am once more at my own disposal; and, unless that ardent love which you formerly bore me be entirely changed, which I do not believe it is, I am now sincerely desirous to make you my wife.

"But I will not deceive you. I can only be such a husband as you desire on condition of being left in quiet possession of that which I believe to be my own. I have ruined my character. Offices of emolument are not easily obtained; but, if they were, I am not a man to be trusted. I will not live a beggar; deprived of all the blessings in which the fools around me wallow, till they turn them into curses. I wish to live happily: unmolested, and unmolested: but, if I must
either

either prey or be preyed upon, I am still resolved rather to act the fox than the goose.

"I know you will condemn this determination; but I am speaking openly; and telling you what my intentions are, without entering into their defence.

"Supposing Mr. Trevor to be convinced that the law will decide the property contested in his favour, the sacrifice demanded of him is perhaps too great to be expected from any man. Yet, from what I have heard and what I know, this is the sacrifice that I do expect. I expect it from his abhorrence of pretending to seek justice by the aid of law. I expect it from that principle which decides in favour of the greatest good. And I expect it from the earnest desire I have heard him express that you might be restored to that happiness which, for a time, you have lost.

"Should he or you conclude that the

motives I now urge originate in that artifice of which I have been very justly accused, I ought perhaps to feel no surprise, and shall certainly make no complaint. But, believe me or believe me not, I have spoken with a sincerity of heart for which I am likely to gain but little credit. Such I feel, at this moment, are the misfortunes to which cunning subjects itself. I am a man but little subject to fear: yet, I own, the fear of being thought still to possess nothing better than this cunning assaults me, obliges me to omit the tender epithets that are in my thoughts, and without addition to sign myself

“F. WAKEFIELD.”

While I read, the eyes of Miss Wilmot were fixed upon my countenance. Whenever I looked toward her, I could perceive the strong emotions, of hope and fear, by which she was agitated.

When

When I had ended, I said—"Mr. Wakefield is indeed an extraordinary man! Be his intentions honest or base, the strength and clearness of his mind and his knowledge of the human heart, when we recollect how these faculties have been employed, are truly astonishing. If this be a plan of artifice, it is little less than miraculous. Yet who can believe it to be any thing else?"

Miss Wilmot heaved a deep sigh, and attempted to speak: but she only stammered. Her utterance failed; and her eyes were cast on the floor. Hope and despair were combating; and the latter was the strongest. She wished to confide, she wished to plead for the possibility of his being sincere: but the mischief he had inflicted, the deceit he had practised, and a remembrance of the picture she had formerly given me of him, rushed upon her mind; and her spirits sunk.

"Look up, lovely Lydia," said I, taking

ing her hand, "and revive. There is there must be hope. The man who could write this letter cannot be all villain."

The struggle of the passions was violent. A momentary wildness, such as I had formerly witnessed, flashed in her eyes; she started from her seat, griped my hand, then bursting into tears exclaimed—
"Oh Mr. Trevor!" and dropped down again upon the chair.

Eager to relieve a heart so overcharged, I again addressed her. "If," said I, "the property left by Mr. Wakefield's uncle can really be employed to so noble a purpose as that of reclaiming him and making you happy, let me perish rather than endeavour to counteract such blessings. Let me be the thing he so much dreads, a beggar: but let me obey the purest passions of the heart, when they are sanctioned by the best principles of the understanding."

Till this instant she had forgotten that,
if

if I consented to enrich him, I must rob myself. But the thought no sooner occurred than she cried, "No! It must not be! It cannot be! To require it of you is infamous. It debases him, and would make me hate myself; were I to participate in such an action."

"You judge too severely," I replied. "I am not so unfortunately circumstanced as he is. My character is not lost. I am not shut out of society. I have friends, plans, and prospects; and, granting him to be sincere, his arguments, as far as they relate to him and me, are I suspect unanswerable. Of that sincerity I would sail not doubt: but it is our mutual duty to be wary. Here therefore at present the matter shall rest. I am determined to bring no action, till time and future events shall teach me the course I ought to pursue."

Overwhelmed by a sense of obligation, and by the thronging emotions of every
kind

kind that assailed her, she was again half suffocated with passion. As she recovered her eyes sufficiently spoke her feelings.

When she grew calm, she was led to ask what conversation I had had, and with whom, relative to Mr. Wakefield? I gave her the history of my acquaintance with the supposed Belmont, and of the scene that had passed that very day: which she thought altogether surprising, and seemed to shrink with the fear that it was an artful plan, contrived by artful men. She was in some sort appeased, however, when I once more reminded her of my determination to wait and hope for the best.

I then enquired concerning the second letter she had mentioned? To which she answered—"It is addressed to me, as a mediator: but relates entirely to you, and the person who wrote it; your poor penitent servant, Philip."

She

She gave it me ; and these were its contents.

“Honoured madam,

“I make bold to lay my case before you ; which as it is very grievous I hope it may move you to pity me. I am the young man that lived with my honoured master Mr. Trevor ; in the same house, madam, that you are pleased to live. My name is Philip. I have been guilty of a very great fault ; for which my conscience worries me night and day. So that I am sure I shall never forgive myself : though I take my holy saviour to witness it was more a mistake than a thought of committing so wicked a crime. I was in a flurry, so that I did not know what I was about ; for to think of having robbed a master that was so kind to me is such a sin and a shame as never was. But I had no notion but that my poor dear master had drowned himself in the river ; and
so,

so, as he had told me the day before to make up my account and he would pay me the next morning. I thought it was hard that I should lose my wages and the money beside which I had laid out for washing, and newspapers, and tea, and sugar, and other materials of that kind : which, though my wages *was* only eight pounds eight shillings, made up the whole to twelve pounds five and three-pence three farthings. Which was the reason to make me do so base a thing as it would else have been as to break open the box, and take out a ten pound note, and four pair of stockings, and two waist-coats : because I knew very well my master's kindness so that it is ten to one, if he had lived to make his will he would have given me them and more. After which I hurried away : being as I was told of a place, with an old master that I was sure would take me again. But I had no more thought that Mr. Trevor was

was living than the child unborn : which since I discovered I have never been at rest ; being out of place, and having nobody now to ask for a character, which is the greatest misfortune that can befall a poor servant that never was guilty of such an action as breaking open his master's box, and running away with his money and things, in all my life before, or since. So that I was tempted to list for a soldier ; but that I happened, honoured madam, to meet your maid Mary, and she persuaded me to write to Mr. Trevor : which I durst not do, though I know his goodness. So she said your honoured ladyship would be so kind and tender hearted as to lay my case before Mr. Trevor, and my dear and honoured mistress, Miss Mowbray, both of which I would run to the world's end to serve. On which she said she was sure they would take my case into merciful consideration,

sideration, and grant me their gracious forgiveness.

“Which is the humble petition of your distressed servant to command, honoured madam.

“PHILIP FRANKS.”

Poor fellow ! Forgive thee ? What is thy crime ? An inaccuracy. A mistake of judgment. A desire to do thyself right, without intentional wrong to me or any one. Yet for this mistake, differently circumstanced, thou mightest have lost thy life, and have been hanged like a dog !

I too accused thee of robbery, of taking more than thy due, when thou tookest less. Hadst thou offered thy old waistcoats and stockings to a street hawker, he would not have given thee half the surplus that was thy due.

Such were the reflections that broke from

from me, after perusing his simple but affecting defence.

Mary was called up, and questioned. She knew where he lived : for the poor, little inclined to suspicion, confide in each other. It is the rich only that tempt them to be treacherous.

After consulting with Miss Wilmot, it was determined that she should write to Olivia ; enclosing Philip's letter, and requesting her to give him a character. I knew she would take care to see him paid the wages that were his due ; and, as I had been the cause of his want of employment since the fright he took at Cranford-bridge, I left money to reimburse him for the loss of his time from that period.

The people I mixed with, and the prejudices of the world, required that I should keep a servant : but, though the man that was with me was by no means so great a favourite as Philip had been, I
did

did not think I had sufficient cause to discharge him for another. There was an additional motive for not wishing Philip to be my servant again; at least not under my present circumstances, Olivia's aunt had imagined we were in league, at Cranford-bridge; and, should she see him once more in my service, that suspicion might either be revived or strengthened.

CHAP. III.

THE PERIOD OF CONTENTION APPROACHES, AND THE UNABATED PATRIOTISM OF THE BARONET. HECTOR AND THE EARL BECOME ENEMIES, AND I AM MADE THE SUBJECT OF NEWSPAPER CALUMNY. THREATENING APPEARANCES. A JOURNEY PROJECTED. A TRAGICAL EVENT, GIVING OCCASION TO THE PRACTICE OF SOME SMALL PORTION OF HUMANITY.

THE dissolution of parliament was hourly expected. Flying reports fixed it to happen on different days; but none

of them very distant. The zeal of Sir Barnard, in behalf of his country and its constitution, was unabated. The measures of ministry were wicked beyond example; and the servility of parliament was unequalled, since the time of the Tudors. Such was the Baronet's continual theme.

From him, and the political circles I frequented, I heard news in which I might be said to be personally concerned. In consequence of the firm refusal of Olivia, a rupture had taken place between Lord Idford and the family: much at first to the regret of the Mowbrays; till the turn that the quarrel took enflamed the latter.

Hector Mowbray had great property, and influence, in the county of which he and I were both natives. Of this county the Earl was the Lord Lieutenant; and here he likewise had his dependents, and partisans. The Mowbrays were wealthy;
and

and Hector was ambitious of being elected knight of the shire. When it was first proposed, the aunt forwarded the project : for there was no probability that any other candidate so powerful should start. The joint interest of the Earl and the Mowbrays would defy opposition.

The Earl however understood traffic ; and, finding himself so positively refused by Olivia, he thought proper to inform the family that she must either be induced to consent, or, instead of aiding to bring Hector into parliament, he should himself propose and support another candidate with the whole weight of his interest.

The threat was galling. It was insinuated first to the aunt ; and, when Hector was informed of it, he affected to vapour and treat it with defiance : but, on better consideration, he and the aunt thought proper to importune Olivia, hoping they should oblige her to comply.

Threats

Threats and intreaties alike were vain. Her resolution was not to be shaken; and the Earl more openly declared that, if she should think proper to persist, he would beggar himself rather than Hector should carry his election.

Hector had been canvassing the county, had subscribed to races, been present at the assizes, given public dinners, and taken various means to increase his popularity; of which he had become inordinately vain. Inflated therefore with a certainty of victory, he threw down the gauntlet, and dared the Earl to the field.

In the mean time, paragraphs appeared in a morning and an evening paper, both of them sold to Government, and the echoes of each other, that were evidently aimed at me, and my connections. At first I could not have conceived how I should have attracted the attention of those worthy gentlemen, who earn their bread by the daily manufactory of lam-

poons : but I was soon informed that this is become a regular branch of business ; and that the motives to carry it on are many. These motives originate in paymasters, of various descriptions : of whom the treasury is supposed to be the chief.

The libels, of which I was the subject, aimed to be satirical ; but were too dull of wing to hit their mark : they were only malignant. They could neither tickle the fancy, nor gall the heart ; but they proved that I had lurking enemies, who wished to wound, did they but know when and where to strike.

It was well known that my professedly dear friend, Glibly, was principally concerned in the morning paper where these libels generally appeared. When I first became acquainted with him, he affected indifference to parties ; and was ready to praise or laugh at either, as circumstances should happen to direct him : but, when the temper of the times became
into-

intolerant and acrimonious, he thought it prudent to take a decided part. That such a man should declare in favour of the weakest was not to be expected; and he now associated with the known hirelings of ministry, of whom I was a still more open and undisguised opponent.

By these attacks on me, Glibly therefore, for they were undoubtedly a part of his handy-work, Glibly, I say, had a three-fold motive. He indulged a propensity, which strange to say he had acquired, of wounding in the dark, that he might smile and shake hands with the insulted person in broad day; he answered the end for which ministry retained him, that of decrying all its antagonists; and he particularly forwarded the views of another of his dear friends, the Earl.

The general complexion of paragraphs like these is falsehood; which is sometimes direct, though it is more commonly a perversion of existing facts. The

pamphlet I had written, which had been partially made known to the public by the advertisement that had appeared, the patronage of Sir Barnard, my ambitious views on the Mowbray family, with such other particulars as the indefatigable Glibly could collect, sometimes delivered in obscure allusions and at others more openly, were the topics of calumny. How many of these ingenious devices to irritate and injure were framed I never knew: for I seldom read them myself, though I heard of them sufficiently often to be assured that they were numerous.

There were various means by which they might have been stopped; and of which, in ordinary cases bribing is chiefly practised: but in this instance fighting, or the law, would have been more effectual. Of these however I totally disapproved. Defamation is an evil: but death is generally and perhaps always a greater; and to prevent enquiry is among the worst

worst of evils. I was not yet sufficiently acquainted, however, with the mistakes to which men are subject, or rather impelled by the institutions they admire, not to feel great surprise and some indignation at the obstacles which I found were continually to impede my career. He who has never travelled into the country of Mosquitoes is not aware how slight a net-work covering will preserve him from their sting.

These were trifles, and would have been unworthy of notice had they not resembled the small cloudy speck, which, though scarcely visible in the distant horizon, approaches, and swells, and bursts over the head in a storm. The beginning contest between the Earl and the Mowbray family, the interest which the worthy Mr. Glibly had thought proper to take in me and my affairs, the patriotism of Sir Barnard, nay the friendship of Mr. Evelyn himself, that best of men,

were but so many links in the chain of that fate which was impending.

At present, however, with respect to the Baronet, I daily increased in favour. He frequently requested me to accompany him when he went down to the house; and paraded with me, arm in arm, through the avenues: catching every man he knew by the button, and introducing me; then descanting on the news of the day, the victories of the minister among his creatures and in the house, and the defeats of his projects every where else.

At length it was generally affirmed and believed that parliament would be dissolved in a fortnight; and, as Sir Barnard wished to keep well with his borough, he proposed that we should go down and visit the worthy and independent electors: among whom he observed we might spend a few days in a pleasant manner, and advantageously to his interest,

rest, till the writ of election should be issued. This was on the Wednesday : but, as there was to be a debate and probably a division of the house on Friday, his sense of public duty would not permit him to be absent on such an occasion, and we agreed to defer our journey till Saturday morning.

During this short interval an incident occurred, which it is necessary I should relate. It happened on the Thursday that, after spending the day near Richmond, where I had been invited to dine, I was returning home on horseback, followed by my servant : for I thought myself obliged to practise some part of that aristocracy which I nevertheless very sincerely condemned.

The night was starlight ; and, as we were cantering down a lane at the entrance of Barnes common, we heard distant cries and the report of a pistol, in the direction as we believed in which we

were proceeding. I immediately stopped, and listened very attentively: but all was soon silent. Being convinced as well by the cries as the firing of the pistol that a robbery, if not something worse, had been committed, and not certainly knowing from what point the sound came, I rode gently forward and continued to listen with the utmost attention: desiring my servant to do the same.

We rode on, still walking our horses and looking cautiously round for some time, without any sight or sound of man approaching us, till we came to a gate at the edge of the common. Here I saw a horse standing patiently, without his rider; and stopping once more to look and listen, I presently perceived an indistinct object: which I discovered to be a man; wounded and weltering in his blood.

I spoke to him: but no answer was returned, nor any sound. I then raised the
body

body in my arms, and it appeared to be lifeless.

What was to be done? A human being, who might be dead or might not, in either case, must not be left in such a situation.

The neighbourhood is populous, and I could distinguish lights at no very great distance. Fearing lest, if I sent my servant he should blunder, or that the persons he might address himself to would be less likely to pay attention to him than to me, I bade him remain by the dead or wounded man; and, mounting my horse, I rode away immediately to procure aid.

My direction was across the common; and fortunately I met with a carriage, which proved to be a hackney coach returning to town with two passengers. I ordered the coachman to stop, and he immediately supposed I was a highwayman: but, being undeceived, he refused to go out of his way for the purpose I required.

The persons within, hearing a kind of squabble, and understanding when they listened the nature of it, spoke to me; and enquired into the particulars. By good luck, they happened to feel properly, and joined me against the coachman; who, though unwillingly, was obliged to submit; and, when he came to the point where the roads join, to turn back and receive the wounded man into the carriage. The passengers alighted, I ordered my man to take the horse of the stranger in charge, and we proceeded slowly to the first inn.

Here I immediately enquired for surgical and medical assistance; and, as the people of these villages are many of them opulent, good practitioners were presently procured.

While the messengers were dispatched, I had leisure to examine the stranger; whose appearance, figure, and countenance, were altogether extremely interesting. His hair was abundant, but
milk

milk white, his features were serene, and his form in despite of age was still manly. The benevolence of his countenance was heightened by the blood with which his locks were in part clotted, and that had streamed over his face upon his clothes and linen.

The medical gentlemen arrived nearly at the same time, the stranger was examined, the pulsation of the heart was perceptible, and, though the contusions on the head and the temple were violent, and he had been shot in the shoulder, so that the ball had passed through behind, they were of opinion, as there was no fracture of the skull, that the wounds were not mortal. The appearance of the stranger, and the condition in which I found him, had made a lively impression upon me. I was fearful of leaving him, in an unknown place, amidst the casualties and hurry of an inn, to the care of waiters, and the neglect of persons

who had scarcely leisure to be humane. I therefore determined to send my servant to town, and stay with him that night. I had an appointment and other business in the morning ; but I could be at London in less than an hour : that was therefore no obstacle.

Hoping to have discovered his place of abode, I desired his pockets to be searched before the people present : but they were entirely emptied ; and contained no paper, or memorandum, that could afford information.

After some time, by the aid which was procured, his pulse began to quicken, and his lungs to do their office ; and, that nothing might be omitted, I prevailed on the physician to remain with me at his bed-side, and attend to every symptom, above half the night. With this he the more willingly complied because he was apprehensive of fever, when the circulation should recover all its elasticity.

In

In the morning, though very unwillingly, I was obliged to forsake my charge: but not till I had left money with the physician, who made himself accountable to the innkeeper for all expences. Being a humane person, I believe he would have done this without my interference. But in addition to that every mark about the stranger, his look, his dress and the horse on which he was mounted, denoted him to be a gentleman; and when I left him, though the physician thought it was probable he might not recover the use of his understanding and the power of speech for a day or two, he yet was persuaded that he would not die.

CHAP. IV.

AN INCIDENT IN THE PARK, OR THE DANGER OF
UNRULY DOGS AND HORSES. THE FORTITUDE
AND AFFECTION OF OLIVIA. A VISIT TO THE
WOUNDED STRANGER.

KNOWING the habits of Sir Barnard to be precise, and pettish, so that if I counteracted the arrangement he had made it would put him into a disagreeable temper, I resolved, as we were to depart early the next morning, to return as soon as possible to the stranger. About two in the afternoon, I was riding through the park for this purpose: and here another incident occurred; which, though it excited extreme terror, it afterward afforded uncommon delight.

A few days before, I had witnessed a lady on a run-away horse, who was seized with fright, dropped from the saddle, and bruised herself exceedingly. She would
have

have been in no danger, if she had behaved but with the ordinary resolution of a man; and the accident led me to reflect on the ill education to which women are subjected. They seem to be esteemed by men in proportion as they are helpless, timid, and dependent. It is supposed they cannot be affectionate unless their leading feature be imbecility.

Just as I had crossed the bridge over the Serpentine river, two ladies and a gentleman with their grooms, all on horseback, were turning round; and went off in a hand gallop toward Kensington gardens. I was riding fast, at no great distance; and perceived it to be Olivia, her aunt, and some person whom I did not know. Olivia was mounted on a fine blood horse; and a large dog rushed by him in pursuit of me, being tempted by my fast galloping.

The horse of Olivia had previously been put upon his mettle. I saw the danger,

ger, and instantly pulled up : but he began to plunge, and kick, in a manner that would have unhorsed most men. The dog then turned from me, and attacked the animal that was highest in motion ; and the horse immediately set off full speed. The foolish servant, being frightened, began to gallop after her. I was obliged to do the same, and stop him : for the clattering of feet behind did but increase the fury of the runaway horse.

Terrified however as I was, when I first noticed the vicious propensities of the horse, the courage of Olivia was such, her seat was so firm, and she kept so steady a hold of the strong curb rein, that I felt a confidence she would overpower the horse ; if the fear and folly of some other person should do no mischief. I therefore followed at a proper distance ; and, when I saw several horsemen who attempted to cross her, I shouted and waved my hat for them to keep off.

My

My hopes were justified. She avoided every danger, by her management and presence of mind ; and, by her use of the curb and the aid of the wall at the end of the ride, arrested the course of the intemperate animal.

Having kept the grooms back, I was the first that came up with her ; and, leaping from my saddle, I seized the reins and held them till the servant arrived. I then enjoyed one more rapturous moment, such as I had indeed but little foreseen : I received her in my arms.

Not a minute before, how firm and collected had her mind and actions been : but no sooner did she feel my embrace than her frame was suffused. A thousand ideas, that had no relation to the danger which her own fortitude had escaped, immediately rushed upon her ; she sunk upon my shoulder, and burst into a flood of tears. They were the heart easings
of

of ten thousand of the foregone anxieties of love.

How could I have hated the broad day, and the prying eyes that were upon us ! How welcome would the fogs and darkness of Cranford-bridge have been ! My adventurous spirit would then have surely imprinted the first kiss of love ! as chaste as it would have been ecstatic.

This bliss, alas, was not to be. The crowd approached. I pressed her hand, and, as an assurance of fidelity, she gently returned the token of kindness. Such mute signs being all that were permitted.

Perceiving I must leave her, I again requested she would not mount the unruly horse ; and she replied, with a heavenly smile, " Have no fear for me. I will be careful of myself ; " to which she added in a low whisper : " for my preserver's sake ! "

Oh moments of unutterable bliss !
Who

Who can estimate your worth? One of you will outweigh a life, such as the dull round of common place nothings can yield.

Did not my eyes thank her? Did not the strong workings of my colour and countenance inform her of what was passing within? Oh yes! And in the same language she involuntarily replied. He who shall suppose there was one emotion which celestial purity might not approve cannot comprehend Olivia. They were emanations such as those only who have souls, as well as bodies, are acquainted with.

The tide of ecstacy must turn. The aunt came up, I bowed, she returned my salute in a manner that shewed her mind was affected by contradictory emotions, and I mounted my horse and guided his head toward the Park gate; through which I passed; feeling, at the moment, that I was passing the gate of paradise.

I had

I had not however left all my heaven behind me. No : I bore with me ample stores for delicious revery. The fortitude of Olivia, the firm and easy grace with which she kept her seat, her admirable management and quick presence of mind, her unabating courage at one moment, and her melting tenderness at the next, were not the food but the feast of love.

In this revelry of the imagination I indulged, till I arrived at the inn ; where I found the physician, agreeable to appointment ; and was informed by him that the stranger still continued insensible : but that the symptoms appeared to be rather more than less favourable.

I remained with the patient during some hours, till the necessary preparation for my journey obliged me to depart. I then left a sufficient sum with the physician ; and, after most earnestly recommending the stranger to his care, reluctantly returned to town.

Though

Though I had obtained a promise, from the physician, that the patient should be removed to his own home, as soon as it should be discovered, or to the house of the physician, whenever it might be done without danger, I yet could not help questioning whether to leave him to the mercy of persons, with whom I was unacquainted, that I might take a journey to visit the free and independent electors of an English borough, were faithfully to fulfill the duties of humanity. Add to which the venerable and benevolent appearance of the stranger was so uncommonly interesting that it made a strong impression upon my imagination.

But it was necessary to decide, and I acted as mortals are obliged to do on such occasions : not knowing what was best, I adopted that which appeared to be the most urgent.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE JOURNEY TO THE BOROUGH OF THE BARNET. INDEPENDENT ELECTORS, AND THEIR MOTIVES SATISFACTORILY EXPLAINED. EVIL COMMUNICATION CORRUPTS GOOD MANNERS. ELECTORS EAGER TO MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES, AND BEING ONCE BOUGHT WISH AGAIN TO BE BRIBED.

THE following morning at the hour appointed, Sir Barnard and I set off for the borough of * * * *: at which we arrived without delay or accident.

The number of voters was little more than thirty; and the first business, after our arrival, was to invite them to a dinner.

It has long been remarked that men in a body will be guilty of actions of which individually they would each be ashamed. In an assembly, however, the purpose of which is conscious iniquity, few, who have not witnessed such scenes, will

will be aware of the efforts that each man will make to argue himself into a belief of his own upright intentions : or of the eager assent with which his endeavours will be seconded by his associates.

In the present instance, for example, what were the motives of the worthy electors ? Sir Barnard explained them, to the perfect satisfaction of all parties.

But what were they ? The love of the constitution : the honest struggles that honest men were making to displace a corrupt minister : their very eager and laudable attempts to free an oppressed and ruined country, relieve it of its taxes, recover its trade, and revive the glory of old England : to effect these great and good purposes was the whole and sole end at which they aimed. Were all the electors through all the boroughs, cities, and counties of Great Britain but as virtuous

tuous as those of the borough of * * * *, it would indeed be a happy land.

Yet, strange to say, what different masks does self-assuming virtue wear ! State the per contra. Imagine only how many free and independent electors were at this period exulting, in a similar manner, at the purity of their own conduct ; while giving their votes for the support of government, the maintenance of order, and to preserve the immaculate statesman, the saviour of the nation, the great financier, the first of orators, the admiration of Europe, and the wonder of the world, in power !

Who will deny that a general election is the season when all the disinterested virtues, all the pure patriotism, all the most generous and best qualities of the soul are called into action ? How are the morals of the people improved ! To what a height of grandeur does human nature

nature rise; and how captivating is the point of view in which it is seen! Æra of incomprehensible excellence!

Can it be supposed that I, who was to be the representative of such free and noble souls, through whose lips their patriotic spirits were to breathe, I, in whom one five hundredth part of the virtue of the whole island was to be compressed, and bottled up ready for use, being as I was in company with sages whose office it was to choose one still more sage than themselves, thus circumstanced, was it possible that I should not imbibe some portion of their sublime wisdom? Had I no sympathy? Were all my affections and passions and patriotism extinct?

Oh no! Mocking, says the proverb, is catching: and, however in my sober moments, among sober people, reasoning on objects at a distance, I might systematise and legislate for the conduct of myself and others, being an actor in the

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scene,

scene, whether its atmosphere were healthy or contagious, I never yet found that I could wholly escape imbibing a part of the effluvia. I gave toasts, made speeches, sung songs, ay and wrote them too, and became so incorporated with my constituents, lovers as they were of liberty, that, the cut of our cloaths and countenances excepted, I might in this moment of overflowing sapience have been taken for one of themselves.

I was little aware, however, when I consented to make this journey, of its consequences. Disinterested as these worthy voters were, and purchased by wholesale as they had been when the family of the Brays bought the borough, they yet had wives and daughters; who wore watches, and rings, and gowns; and who would each of them think themselves so flattered, by a genteel present from me, that there was no describing the pleasure it would give them!

Every

Every *particular* about me told them I was very much of a gentleman.

Beside which, one lady had a great affection for a few pounds of the best green tea, bought in London. Another discovered that the loaf sugar in the country was abominable. A third could not but think that a few jars of India pickles, and preserved ginger, would be a very pretty present. It would always remind her of the giver. A fourth could not but say she *did* long for a complete suit of lace; cap, handkerchief, and ruffles: and so on through the whole list.

The men too were troubled with their longings. With one it was London porter: with another it was Cheshire cheese and bottled beer. They would both drink to the donor. Their neighbour longed very vehemently indeed for the horse I rode: and, finding that the animal was too great a favourite to be parted with,

he compounded for twelve dozen of old port.

When these hints, which looked very like demands, were first given me, I applied to Sir Barnard; doubting much whether any of them ought to be complied with: but he let me understand that such things were politic, and customary; and that a seat in parliament, even when bestowed, was not to be had free of expence.

What could be done? To have required him to pay these disbursements would have had so much the appearance of meanness, that it was what I could not propose. To request a loan in advance of Mr. Evelyn was sufficiently grating to the feelings: but he had a liberal spirit, it was the least painful of the two, and I had no other resource. Fortune was whetting the darts she soon intended to hurl.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

NEWS FROM MOWBRAY PETITIONING FOR AID.

THE PERIOD OF UNIVERSAL UPROAR ARRIVES,
AND THE BARONET PURSUES HIS PATRIOTIC
PURPOSES. A FEW SKETCHES OF A COUNTY
CONTEST AT A GENERAL ELECTION. HECTOR
LOVING IN HIS LIQUOR. QUALMS OF CONSCIENCE,
WHICH ARE THOUGHT VERY UNSEASONABLE
AND VERY RIDICULOUS. THE INCOMPREHEN-
SIBLE DEFECTION OF SIR BARNARD, AND THE
SUSPICION THAT LIGHTS ON ME.

WHILE we were spending our time in this "pleasant manner, and advantageously to the Baronet's interest," we received intelligence of our quondam friends, the Earl and young Mowbray; who were canvassing the county, in which they had vowed opposition to each other, with indefatigable zeal: so that a ruinous contest, probably to both parties, was predicted.

In this county Sir Barnard himself had some interest: for he had some lands

E 3

there:

there : and Hector prevailed on a common friend to write in a very urgent style to the Baronet, requesting his aid. How could so great a lover of his country as Sir Bernard, indignant too as he felt himself at the apostacy of the Earl, refuse a request by which his own patriotic purposes might be forwarded ?

At length parliament was dissolved ; and the whole kingdom was immediately in a tumult. Driving, rioting and uproar began. God help the poor post-horses, hostlers, and chambermaids !

The writ for the Baronet's borough was made out, his agents were ready, and, as there could be no opposition, our business was soon over. It was high time : for my pocket was tolerably drained. And as the worthy electors very industriously compared notes, when any one of them discovered that the present made to his neighbour was of greater value than the *compliment* which he had received, I had
imme-

immediate intimation of my own injustice : which it was expected I should correct.

This serious business settled, and these accounts closed, the Baronet now had leisure to think of his friends ; and he turned his thoughts to the annoying of Lord Idford. He had purchased me as well as his borough : for he had made me his own member, and meant to profit by me in all possible ways. He had discovered my electioneering talents. I was very engaging among the women : a matter of no small moment in such affairs : and, “ though I was rather shy of my glass, yet I could sing an excellent song, which I could likewise make, quite suitable to the occasion.” He therefore proposed that we should both journey into my native county, and there exercise all our wit and ingenuity, to aid in bringing in my old school-fellow, Hector.

It cannot be supposed that, in an affair

E 4

where

where the family and the brother of Olivia were so seriously implicated, I could be totally unconcerned. With respect to the question of who was the most virtuous, or the most wise, who the greatest orator, the best patriot, or the properest person to take a seat among the grand national council of sages, the Earl or the 'Squire, that was not easily determined. It was a point therefore that did not disquiet my conscience. My compliance was consequently given with a hearty good will ; and we both prepared for the holy work.

How it happened that the vice which inevitably attaches itself to such conduct, self-evident gross and glaring as it is, fatal to private morals and public virtue, odious in its practice and hellish in its consequences, how the baneful complexion of this monster vice should at first so totally escape me is more than I can declare. Hurry of thought, confusion
of

of intellect, and eagerness of passion are the only probable conjectures I can make. My mind was so intent on the manner in which I could best prove my respect for Olivia, and all that related to her, that this appears to have been a gulph vast enough for all recollection, sense, and idea !

A post-chaise and four soon brought us to the field of battle ; and then I own my blood began to circulate, and my feelings to awaken. Still it was but gradually that my spirits mounted to the proper tone.

Before we entered the place where the election was to be held, we heard the jangling of bells and the shouts of men. The postillions spared neither whip nor spur ; and, as we galloped furiously along the streets, the people came swarming out : the women and children saluting us with their shrill trebles ; and, it being dark, the men crowding to fol-

low with torches and more sonorous hubbub. Every inn was a scene of confusion. When we drove up to that which was the head-quarters of Hector, his partisans immediately flocked round us, and, a courier having previously announced our arrival, saluted Sir Barnard with all the force of lungs they could heave: elated in proportion to the uproar they made.

The 'Squire and his friends, vociferous though they were, and heated with anticipated triumphs wine and wassail, heard the glorious din, learned its cause, and came reeling forth to embrace their puissant ally. Quitting as they did the fumes of buttocks and sirloins, gammons and hams, turkies and geese, wines, brandies, beers and tobacco, they all came reeking; each involved in his own atmosphere.

Their joy was boisterous, and not to be repulsed. Hector was as drunk as the animal that brought the royal David his
sucking

sucking pigs; and as loving as the monster in the Tempest. He could not indeed curse so poetically: but what he wanted in variety he supplied by repetition; and his oaths and his raptures were countless.

He bestowed a part of them upon me: for, not only did feasting make him fond, but, he had just memory enough left to recollect that I was now become an M. P. and he was not quite sure whether, till he had gained his election, I might not at present be almost as great a man as himself. I was moreover his electioneering friend: which virtue would, for a fortnight to come, be inestimable.

I had been disgusted with the eating and drinking required at the ready-bought borough of ****: but that was abstinence itself, compared to the scene in which I had consented to become an actor. Away the Baronet and I were dragged,

by the most jovial crew: Hector our leader, and seating himself in state at our head.

"Clean glasses!" bellowed the hero; and, seizing his own, smashed it against the wall: commanding us to follow his noble example. Midway drunkenness disdains to think: all arms were raised, and destruction was impending. Fortunately, there were two sober men in company; and, seeing what had happened, we both loudly called—"Forbear!" "You have cut one of the waiters," added I; addressing myself to Hector, and pointing to a man whose face was smeared with blood. "Damn him!" retorted the brave Hector. "Put him down in the bill." The mighty man was pleased at his own second-hand wit; and, as an old joke is the soonest understood, they all joined in the laugh.

Eager to make the new comers welcome, that is as drunk as himself, Hector insisted

insisted that the Baronet and I should drink three bumpers each; and, as the fatigue of travelling had rendered this no difficult task, we complied.

He then swore we would *set to* for the night; but I perceived that his night would not be a long one. Toasts were called for, however, and liquor was swallowed, till its vapours half deprived the redoubted Hector of the faculty of speech. At this period, he began to mutter nonsense, on a subject on which I should have been better pleased with his silence than his praise. He made the lovely Olivia his theme; and in the fulness, not of his heart, but, of his stomach, told me how dearly she loved me—"Yes, my boy, she does, by G—! And she's right! Damn me, she's right! I say it; by G—, my boy, she's right! You are my friend!—You are my friend, and she's right. And as for Lord kifs——damn me, he's a sneaking scoundrel! I say it, a sneak."

a sneaking —— ! So she's right ! Damn me, she's right !”

He continued to repeat his oaths, and “She's right,” till, entirely overpowered, he sunk ; and would have dropped from his chair, if the waiter whom he had cut with the glass had not caught him. Some of the guests had withdrawn, some were sleeping, and some were senseless : but the few who could open their eyes, and see to such a distance, triumphed in the defeat of their leader : which they considered as victory to themselves.

Riot now paused per force. The Baronet pleaded fatigue, and retired. I followed his example, and once more found myself alone ; left to ruminate on the methods which men take to make each other happy ; on their different modes of happiness, in their different stations : and on waiters who, being maimed or killed, are to be charged in the bill.

Though

Though these thoughts were not of the most delightful kind, they did not prevent me from sleeping. The new day brought new cares; and presented projects, in which I was required to take my part, that led me to very serious meditations indeed. The poll was to begin that day week; and Hector and his friends, roused from the torpor of overloaded revelry by the importance of the business, assembled to consider how they should best collect and marshal the voters of whom they supposed themselves to be certain, and cajole and bring over such as they imagined might be gained.

Of this labour each man was to take his allotted share; and direct bribery was openly proposed as the general medium by which the great end in question was to be promoted.

This was what I had not foreseen. I was not only young but, as I have before remarked, I had thought but little on the
affair :

affair : except as it continually presented the image of Olivia to my mind. I now found myself most painfully situated. I had discovered principles of human conduct in which I had gloried. I had asserted them unsparingly; and had promised myself that from them I would never depart. In doubtful cases, I might decide and act erroneously : but, when the way was clear, my conduct should be the same.

These principles I was required to abandon ; and the shock was severe. The transactions which had lately passed in the Baronet's borough increased the difficulty. In what light could the presents that I had made be considered? In what were they different from and how much better than bribes? To these I had submitted when my own interest was in question. Again : for what purpose had I consented to accompany Sir Barnard, if not to exert myself in favour of
of

of his friend ? And not only his friend but the brother of Olivia ; though this was a silent grief, known only to myself. However I stated my scruples : which, as soon as they were heard, were the subject of laughter. I repeated them in a still more serious tone, and was reminded of the facts, and motives which I have just been mentioning.

The struggle was violent. The arguments I had to urge were something like insults, on every body present that heard me ; and I was answered sometimes with ridicule, at others with anger, and not unfrequently with something very like contempt.

The Baronet in particular augured very unfavourably, concerning the subserviency which he expected from me ; and once or twice spoke in a very dictatorial tone : but, finding himself answered with no little indignation, he had no remedy but to chew the cud in silence.

Affailed

Assailed on all sides, as it happened I had the good sense, in despite of every mockery and insinuation, to remain firm; and the only part I could be prevailed upon to take determinately was that of aiding in a fair and open canvas, leaving those who were less conscientious to distribute bribes. As it was imagined however that I possessed some abilities, my services were accepted on my own conditions.

Meanwhile the waste that was committed, the bribes that were paid, and the money that was squandered in every way, as well in London, where voters were eagerly purchased and sent down by coach loads, as in distant parts of the county and kingdom, convinced me that the sums which this election would cost must be enormous. I even thought it my duty to take an opportunity, in one of Hector's half sober moments, to remonstrate with all the arguments and
energy

energy I could collect; and endeavoured to persuade him to decline the poll. But my efforts were useless. He was equally vain of his wealth and his influence. His purse perhaps was as deep as that of the proud peer; his friends as numerous; and he would carry his election though he were to mortgage every foot of land he possessed.

Finding him resolved, I became anxious in his behalf, strained every nerve, rode in all directions night and day, and so effectually exerted myself in enquiring who were the independent men likely to be influenced by honest motives, that I procured him above fifty votes.

With respect to himself, the continual drinking, vociferating, and riot of the scene had made him so hoarse that, previous to the day of election, his husky whispers were not audible.

The evening before the poll opened, an incident occurred for which, at that time,

time, I knew not how to account. It was no less amazing than incomprehensible. I had returned very much fatigued, after hard riding, and found a message had been left for me by Sir Barnard ; who desired to speak with me immediately.

I obeyed the summons, and found him alone. He opened the conversation in a strange blustering tone : complaining of having been neglected, or insulted ; he did not seem to know which ; and, to my astonishment, declared his satisfaction at the scruples which I had professed. He knew not what to say to such corrupt proceedings. Perhaps an honest man ought to have no concern in them ; and, for his own part, he certainly should trouble himself no farther on the present occasion. He had met with but little thanks for what he had already done ; and he had come to a resolution not to bring up his voters.

Acquaint-

Acquainted with the corrupt arts by which the promises of these voters, generally speaking, had been gained, I knew not what to reply: though I felt no little chagrin. With the aid of Sir Barnard, it was supposed that Mowbray's election would certainly have been carried: but without that aid I was persuaded it would as certainly be lost.

This opinion I forcibly repeated: adding that, though elections like these were destructive beyond description to the general happiness, and though I could not defend having taken any part whatever in one of them, yet the mischief in the present instance had already been done. If Sir Barnard had received any insult, or even suffered any neglect, I intreated that he would permit me to be the mediator, and state his griefs: being persuaded, from all I had seen, that nothing injurious to his person or his interest had been intended.

His

His answers were evasive. He acted as men frequently do, who have some secret purpose which they dare not avow : he affected that waspish irritation of temper to which he was subject on many occasions ; but on none so frequently as when he suspected himself to be wrong.

While we were in the heat of this discourse, a chaise and four drove up to the door. It was for the Baronet. His trunk and mine were both prepared, by his orders. The men were buckling the former behind the carriage ; and he requested me to accompany him to town.

I was thunderstruck ! I could neither account for such sullen intemperance nor the secrecy of this haste. I again urgently intreated I might acquaint Mr. Mowbray, and his committee : but he peremptorily refused, and repeated his desire that I would accompany him immediately. No arguments, no prayers, could move him : so that, at last, I hastily left
the

the room, in search of Hector and his friends.

He guessed my intention, and as soon as I was gone stepped into the chaise and ordered the boys to drive away full speed: leaving me behind to act as I should think proper; but with a message that, if I wished to oblige him, I must mount my horse and ride after him with all expedition. I might overtake him at the next inn; and our servants and horses would then follow at leisure.

It was some time before I could find Mowbray, or any of his party. They were at another inn, promoting the good cause; and, when I informed them of the intentions of Sir Barnard, they scarcely could believe me: but, when they heard the chaise was at the door, they hurried with me; full of anxiety and dismay. We were too late. Sir Barnard was gone: long out of hearing, and out of sight.

The consternation was extreme. Stupefied as his faculties were, for a moment Hector was roused. Conjectures were formed, but none presented themselves that could account for such extraordinary conduct. No one knew of any offence that had been given the Baronet. It was remarked indeed, on recollection, that the last day or two he had not testified the same alacrity and zeal: but no man could guess his motive.

At length the indignation of Hector took vent in a volley of curses, which were plentifully and emphatically bestowed. And so keenly was the stroke felt, that he put a very unusual quantity, small though it was, of variety in his oaths. Not only the body and blood of Sir Barnard, but his liver, eyes, and heart, were consigned over to Satan.

Even I, though I had procured votes distinct from the interest of the Baronet, and had refused to follow him to town,

in which refusal I persisted, still I did not escape suspicion. No direct allegation was made : but the questions that were put to me were sufficiently expressive of doubt.

The irritated mind is apt at error; and I disdained to make a personal application of the guilt by which I knew myself uncontaminated.

CHAP. VII.

THE OPENING OF THE POLL. MY FIRST ESSAY AT PUBLIC ORATORY. THE GENERAL FEELINGS OF MEN IN FAVOUR OF VIRTUE, THOUGH CONTRADICTED BY THEIR PRACTICE. THE HATEFUL SPECTACLE OF A CORRUPT ELECTION, AND MORE CAUSE OF COMPLAINT AGAINST THE BARONET. A FALSE ACCUSATION RESENTED.

PASSION dispels passion, and care combats care. Sir Barnard was gone, diligence was the more necessary, and pre-

parations for the approaching day would not admit of neglect. It may well be said that circumstances and situation make the man. Hector, who had no habitual capacity for business or intellect for order, was inspired by the occasion with a degree of talent of which at other times he was incapable. The fatigue he underwent was excessive; and, impossible as it was that he should create any strong sympathy, I still felt some interest in his behalf; and some alarm at the fixed hoarseness by which his lungs were threatened, and the alteration which incessant drinking and unusual efforts had produced in his appearance.

The night was passed with more than ordinary tumult. It was late before the riotous guests departed; and our rest was short. The day of beginning contest soon broke upon us, the word of command was given to muster, and all was in action. The friends of the opposing parties

parties collected, each round their respective leaders: favours for the hat and bosom were lavishly distributed: the flags were flying: a band of music preceded each of the processions: and, when the parties approached the hustings, each band continued to play its own favourite air with increasing violence: as if war were to be declared by the most jarring discord, and harmony driven from the haunts of men.

The grating sounds were increased by ballad-singers, marrowbones and cleavers, and the vociferous throats of men who seemed to imagine that, if they were but sufficiently noisy, they could not fail of being victorious.

The scaffolding was mounted, the candidates appeared, and mouths, ears, and eyes were open; for the reception of all the wisdom and patriotism, with all the *comicality* and *fun*, which the orators were expected to bestow. A mob delights in

being harangued ; and is thrown into raptures by every kind of mountebank.

Jealous perhaps of his own honor, the god of eloquence decreed that neither the wit nor the wisdom of Hector should that day be heard. He was too hoarse for any effort to make him audible : but, as stirring and ambitious spirits on such occasions are always abroad, tongues were not wanting to trumpet forth his high deserts.

The candidates for oratorical fame were several. I was of the number : and, as the gloss of my newly acquired dignity dazzled other eyes as well as my own, I was permitted to take the lead. It was my first essay ; and I felt a momentary alarm : but, full of youthful spirits and high in blood, I dashed forward ; and uttered what first occurred.

My voice was powerful, my nonsense was applauded, my fears vanished, and I became more collected. The real grievances

ances of mankind, under the best government that ever yet existed, have at all times been so numerous that an orator, who makes them his theme, is never in want of facts and arguments.

Could I then feel this deficiency at an epocha like the one in question : when means so despotic were daily adopted to curb the growing spirit of enquiry that despot ministers might pursue measures so tragical ; so subversive of the order which they pretended to maintain, and so destructive to the happiness they were appointed to guard ? Alas ! the topics were so numerous, so melancholy, so almost maddening, that the man who would paint them truly must temper and rein-in his feelings with an iron arm : otherwise, imagination will so hurry him away that, while describing evils past, evils present, and evils impending, there is danger of his being deemed an incendiary.

I spoke ill. When I remembered what

I had said, and what I might and ought to have said, I was indignant at my own want of recollection. The applause that I received nevertheless was prodigious: the acclamations of the mob were even awful. They displayed a feeling of justice so acute, so prompt, and so powerful, that I was borne out of myself; and imagined for a moment, not merely that the day of reform was at hand, but that it was come.

Men are rendered selfish, and corrupt, by the baneful influence of the systems under which they live: but it is well worthy the attention of those who believe mankind to be generally capable of great happiness, and who are desirous to promote it, that, however the wants of the wretched may tempt them to accept the immediate relief that is within their reach, they never collectively fail to bestow the most unbounded applause, on those principles by which their own proceedings
are

are condemned. They are not in love with baseness : it is forced upon them.

The reader is doubtless aware that Hector and his friends assumed to themselves the merit of what is called the independent interest ; and that his opponent was supported by the whole influence of the court party. The numerous groans and hisses, and the few plaudits, bestowed upon the orators of this party, were additional proofs of what is the general sense of mankind ; and that on the subject of corrupt influence at least they judge rightly. In this general sense I own that my soul triumphed : and the pangs which I felt, after the poll began, to perceive that, whatever men might think, they could forget their duty and vote only as their interest directed, were undescribable.

However, the party of Hector was strong. The struggle was violent. Every scandalous art of election was resorted to,

by both sides. A spirit of rancour daily and hourly increased. The opponents came to frequent blows. Beastly drunkenness, bloated insolence, and profligacy of principle, met the eye on every side; and I almost hated myself, not only for being present at and participating in it, but, to find that I belonged to a race of animals capable of such foul and detestable vice.

From this distress I was relieved by an event which in itself was very far from satisfactory. The poll had proceeded for some days with tolerable equality; and Hector had rather the advantage: though the voters in the interest of Sir Barnard had not given him their assistance; to which they had frequently been urged. At length, they appeared. And how great was the surprise and indignation of our whole party, to see them marshalled on the opposite side, with the favours of the Idford candidate in their hats, and

and uniformly come up and poll against us !

On the same day, twelve of the votes which had been promised to me were likewise brought over to the opposite interest ; and ten more of them refused to poll for either party.

The coincidence of this desertion revived the suspicions of Hector and his party, concerning me. This sudden turn of the poll against him rendered his temper ungovernable ; and, in the frenzy of passion, he made no scruple of openly affirming that I was no less guilty than the Baronet.

It was not merely the consciousness of innocence that I felt. I had been so indefatigable in every possible way, I had ridden and walked and talked, I had been his defender, his eulogist, his orator, his slave, and had as it were so fouled my conscience in his cause that indignation closed my lips. I disdained reply,

or self vindication ; and, casting a glance such as irresistible feeling dictated, left the committee room in which the accusation was made without answering a word.

CHAP. VIII.

THE RETURN TO TOWN. A VISIT TO SIR BEN-
NARD. ADMISSION DENIED. ENQUIRIES AF-
TER THE WOUNDED STRANGER, WHO HAD DIS-
APPEARED. AN ENDEAVOUR TO GUARD AGAINST
MISREPRESENTATION. THE FEARS AND FEEL-
INGS OF FRIENDS.

MY determination was taken, my ser-
vant was called, my horses ordered, and
I immediately departed for London. My
thoughts were far from being clear, or of
a pleasant kind. The scene I had left
was the most odious that I had ever be-
held. Hector I was convinced would
lose his election ; and, what was more
valuable, his health. I saw prognostics
which

which I thought could not be mistaken ; and which afterward proved as baleful as I then imagined them to be. Whether the contest might not ruin the family was more than I knew ; and what the effect might be on Olivia, and even on our hoped for union, I could not foresee.

The enigmatical conduct of Sir Barnard was no less perplexing. His sudden desertion of Hector, and of the cause which he had so loudly defended, were alarming. For what other interpretation could be put upon the voters in the Baronet's interest, who not only refused to poll according to their promise, but were all of them brought up in support of the Idford candidate ? Yet I was loth to conclude that an event so fatal to all my hopes, as well to my private affections as to my public duties, had taken place.

My horses were excellent, and carried us seventy miles in less time than it would

have taken to go post. I intended to have ordered a chaise for the remainder of the way : but a mail coach was to pass in half an hour, and I waited. There happened to be a vacancy in which I seated myself; and by these means I arrived in town early in the morning.

As soon as the day was far enough advanced, my first care was to visit Sir Barnard; and I own I approached the street and the house with a foreboding heart. What had happened could not be unintentional. It was too decided, too abrupt, and had too many marks of unprincipled treachery. I knocked, made my enquiries, and was informed the Baronet was not at home. I asked for Lady Bray; and not at home was again the answer.

As this was what I apprehended, it excited but little surprise, though much vexation. However I left my card; and departed more full of meditation even than

than I came. Not at home I had no doubt signified that my visits were no longer welcome.

Still it was necessary I should know the truth; and, as I had been too intimate with the family to be ignorant of the haunts of Sir Barnard, I went to the Cocoa tree, a place to which he daily resorted, and there lounged away between two and three hours over the papers; hoping he would come.

I was again disappointed. The Baronet did not make his appearance; and I began to conjecture that perhaps the servant had told me truly: he might be out early; on business, or I knew not what.

As it was past his hour at the Cocoa tree, perhaps I should now find him at home. I therefore went back; and again made my enquiries, and again received the same dry laconic answer. It had an ill face: but I had no immediate remedy.

My.

My next most pressing object of attention was the wounded stranger ; whom I had left under the care of the physician, and whom I immediately determined to enquire after : not without some silent reproaches to myself, for having so long been absent on schemes such as those in which I had been concerned, to the neglect of perhaps a more serious duty. For duty seemed to require that men should rather abstain from elections, such as they are at present, than become aiders and abettors of them.

My horses not being arrived, and disliking the vehicle of a hackney coach, I walked forward to the inn at which the stranger had been left ; musing much on the prospect before me, which was once more beginning to be heavily overcast.

Being come to my journey's end, I found the stranger had been removed two days after I left him to London : but the people of the inn could give me

no farther intelligence, concerning him or the place of his residence.

I then asked them to direct me to the house of the physician : which they did, but told me that he had left the kingdom.

Determined however to make every possible enquiry, I went to the house ; where I found only a person who was left in charge of the premises, and who knew nothing more than that the physician was gone with a patient to Lisbon.

These little incidents, trifling as they appeared, afforded me an excellent proof of the absurdity of false modesty : which induces men, from the egoistical fear of being thought vain, to conceal or disguise the truth. The physician had bestowed high eulogiums on my humanity : after which, he had hinted a desire, but with well-bred reserve, to know who I was ; and I, catching the apparent delicacy of his feelings and thinking but
very

very little on the subject, imagined there would be ostentation in personally taking to myself his praises, by giving him my name and place of abode. I therefore told him I would answer that question when we became better acquainted ; if he should then find he had no reason to alter his good opinion of me.

Thus do men by affecting not to be vain, indulge a kind of double refined vanity ; and lead themselves and others into error.

Being disappointed in all my enquiries of this day, my next care was to see Miss Wilmot. Surrounded as I was by persons who thought me inimical to them, and therefore were probably my inveterate enemies, I knew not what false reports might be spread ; nor how to guard against them in the public opinion. But I had one consolation. Olivia had declared she was resolved to enquire, before she again gave the least credit to calumny.

It

It was therefore essentially necessary that I should acquaint Miss Wilmot with all that had passed.

It was now evening; and, when I came to her lodgings, I found her brother and Turl both there. Though my absence had been short, the meeting gave me no little pleasure. It would likewise save me the trouble of a thrice told tale: for to friends like these my heart was always open; and I had something like an abhorrence of concealment, and secret transactions. I wished them to share in all my joys; and, as to my griefs, they not only excited their sympathy but produced remarks and counsel, by which they had often been cured.

I told my story; and it may well be imagined-my hearers were neither inattentive nor unmoved. The selfishness and depravity into which men are driven, and the vices of which being thus impelled they are capable, exemplified as
these

these vices were in my narration, drew heavy sighs from the gentle and kind hearted Lydia, made her much oppressed brother groan in spirit, and excited in Turl those comprehensive powers that trace the history of facts through a long succession, and teach, by miseries that are past, how miseries in future are to be avoided.

The general feeling however was that danger was hovering over me. The indignation of Wilmot, at the treatment of men who most endeavoured to deserve well of their age and country, was very strong.

Neither was Turl less moved. His manner was placid, yet his feelings were acute. But, though they might vibrate for a moment toward discord, they touched the true harmony at last. He who has fixed principles of action is soon called to a recollection of his duties, and the manner in which he ought to act.

Roused

Roused by his friendship for me, I should rather say by his affection, he collected his faculties; and presented to the imagination so sublime a picture of fortitude, and of the virtue of enduring injuries and oppression with dignity, that he prepared my mind most admirably for the trials that were to succeed.

CHAP. IX.

A SECOND AND MORE SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO
OBTAIN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BARONET.
AN ENIGMATICAL DIALOGUE: THE MEANING
OF WHICH HOWEVER MAY BE GUESSED.

IT was not only the wish of my heart but it was quite necessary for me to see Mr. Evelyn. However, it was exceedingly desirable that I should previously meet the Baronet: lest, in what I should say, my surmises might be false; and I might produce a family disagreement between

tween persons who would both have conferred essential benefits on me, if the supposed defection of Sir Barnard should not be true. I determined therefore once more to go to the Cocoa tree and wait.

As it happened, waiting was not necessary. The Baronet was there; and, though there was something of coldness in his manner, it was by no means what my fears had taught me to expect. Salutation having passed, I requested to speak with him. We retired into a private room; and he began by telling me he was glad to see me again in town; and no longer continuing to support a person whom he no longer esteemed his friend.

At hearing this remark, and the significance with which it was delivered, my evil augury returned upon me in full force. I answered that I had quitted Mr. Mowbray not because I had deserted his interest,

interest, but because I had been unjustly accused.

“Accused of what, Mr. Trevor?”

“Of having been influenced by you to betray a party which I had pretended to espouse.”

“And were you not influenced by me, Mr. Trevor?”

“I never can be influenced by any man, Sir Barnard, to commit an action which my heart condemns.”

“Do you mean, Mr. Trevor, that your heart condemns me?”

“The question is very direct; and I am not desirous of wounding your feelings, Sir Barnard: but I must not be guilty of falsehood. I certainly wish you had acted otherwise.”

“Then you pretend to set up for yourself, Mr. Trevor; and to have no deference whatever for me, and my opinions.”

“Personally, as a gentleman who meant

meant to do me service, I wish to preserve every respect for you, Sir Barnard. But I hope you do not expect of me any deference that should, on any occasion whatever, induce me to abandon either my public or my private duties."

"Very well, Mr. Trevor. Very well. I dare say you are so perfectly acquainted with your duties that no man on earth, not even he who had been your greatest friend, could induce you to alter any of your notions."

"I should hope, Sir Barnard, that either friend or enemy might so induce me: provided he had truth and reason on his side."

"Very well, Mr. Trevor. All that is very fine. I dare say you understand your own interest, and will take your own road: even though you might if you pleased travel more at your ease, and in better company, by going another way."

“Will you be kind enough to explain yourself, Sir Barnard?”

“No, Mr. Trevor. I shall give no explanations, till I am sure I am talking to my friend: my fast friend, Mr. Trevor: that will think and act with me. If you will give me your word and honor as a gentleman to that, why then we will talk together.”

“If by thinking and acting together, Sir Barnard, you mean that you expect I should blindly and implicitly conform to any tergiversation—I mean to any change——”

“You need explain yourself no farther, Mr. Trevor. I very well understand your meaning. My friend is my friend, Mr. Trevor; and he is no other man’s friend, Mr. Trevor. I could not but suppose you understood all that perfectly at first; and I am very sorry to be so much deceived. But it is my misfortune
to

to be always deceived, and entrapped; and——”

“Entrapped, Sir Barnard! I hope you do not apply that word to me?”

“Nay, nay, Mr. Trevor, I want no quarrelling.”

“Nor do I, Sir Barnard. But, if you suppose me capable of taking any advantage of what you may now think an ill-placed confidence in me, you egregiously mistake both my intentions and my character.”

“I hope I do, Mr. Trevor. You have a great fluency: but I hope I do.”

I saw him preparing to go; and, being exceedingly anxious to have a determinate answer, I added—“Let me intreat you, Sir Barnard, to give me an explicit declaration of what you expect from me?”

“You must excuse me, Mr. Trevor. I shall say no more, at present. You say I mistake your intentions. I hope I do.

Time

Time will tell. When you are my friend, I shall be very glad to see you; and so will Lady Bray. Good morning to you, Mr. Trevor."

CHAP. X.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MUTABILITY OF FORTUNE, ON MONEY EXPENDED, AND ON THE DUTIES OF LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP. A STRANGE INCIDENT, SHEWING THE PROPENSITY OF MAN TO SUPERSTITIOUS TERRORS. A LAMENTABLE AND UNEXPECTED EVENT.

WELL might I forebode the approach of evil: and, except that complaint is of no avail, is waste of time, is unhappiness and therefore is immoral, well might I complain of those sudden strokes of fate by which, whenever my prospects began to be flattering, they were suddenly obscured in darkness and despair. But, if I had not supposed myself marked in an

extraordinary manner as the child of fortune, to whose smiles and frowns I seemed to be capriciously subjected, I know not what should have induced me to have written my history ; or rather the history of my youth ; for of what is yet reserved for me I am still ignorant.

Not that I pretend to consider the hypocrisy, selfishness and profligacy of titled folly, and church pride, as things in themselves extraordinary. It was the coincidence and the number and manner of them, by which in the crisis of my fate I seemed to be so repeatedly and so peculiarly affected, that occasioned surprise and pain.

Yet what was all that I had hitherto felt from persons like these, when I remember that which I was now immediately doomed to feel ? The perverted and the vicious it is true can excite emotion, and excite it strongly. But how comparatively feeble does their utmost malice

malice seem, as far as it affects only ourselves, when brought in competition with the thunder-bolt that strikes the virtuous; that shuts the gate of hope; and that robs us of those unspeakable pleasures which imagination has fondly stored, as a grand resource against evil, fall when and how it may?

Parting from the Baronet, expecting what was almost certain some change of political sentiment, no matter how brought about, by which my flattering expectations were at once to be rooted up, my thoughts inevitably flowed into that train which was bitterness little short of anguish. Mr. Evelyn was a man of such peculiar virtue and disinterested benevolence, of a heart so generous and so little capable of accusing me in consequence of the baseness of others, that to have suspected him of such a mistake would have been the height of injustice. But I could not forget the sums that he

had advanced, in all four hundred pounds, the more than probable failure of all the plans for which they had been advanced, and the incapacity I had and should have to repay these sums.

Neither could I forbear to take a retrospective view of the manner in which they had been expended. Could I approve of that manner? Could I forget how short a time it was, though I had squandered my own money, since I had forfeited no atom of my independence by accepting the earnings of others? Suppose this parliamentary plan to fail, and fail it must, for there were no hopes that I could honestly retain my seat, to what other means could I resort? While I continued to indulge in wild and extravagant schemes of enriching myself, by which I did but impoverish others, ought I to require of Olivia to partake of my folly, and its consequences? Had I nothing but the cup of wretchedness to offer,

offer, and must I still urge her to drink? Was it not my duty rather to tear myself at once away from her; and place some insurmountable barrier between us, that should relieve her from such an ill-fated predilection?

Full of these thoughts, I proceeded toward the residence of Mr. Evelyn. It was necessary that I should see him immediately: for silence would have been the meanest deceit. I went with an afflicted heart. But how did I return? Why do I say afflicted? No! Anguish, real anguish, since I had known him, had not yet reached me. But it was coming. It was rushing forward, like a torrent; to bear away inferior cares and sorrows, and engulph them wholly.

Unexpected events are sometimes peculiarly marked, by certain uncommon incidental circumstances. As I was walking hastily forward, anxious to meet Mr. Evelyn at home, I saw a coffin borne

before me by four men at some distance. Their pace was brisk. I had several streets to pass, before I arrived at the house where Mr. Evelyn had apartments; and still the coffin turned the way that I was to go.

I overtook and went before it: but the gloomy object had excited my attention, and I presently looked behind me. Still it took the same route. I looked again, and again; and it was continually at my heels.

It is strange how imagination will work, and how ideas will suggest themselves. I wished it any where else: but it seemed to pursue me.

At length I came to my journey's end; and, having knocked at the door, looked round with a kind of infatuated fear. The coffin was following, and I stood with an absurd and fanciful trepidation, waiting that I might once see it fairly past the door. Yet I was no bigot, no believer
in

in omens, and was almost ashamed of an idea which the coffin itself and the gloomy state of my mind had suggested: but which was in reality superstitious. The servant came, and the door was opened: but the coffin approached, and I would not stir till it should pass me.

Pass it did. But where? Into the passage.

I stood speechless. The men asked where it was to go? "Into the first floor," was the answer.

It was the apartment of Mr. Evelyn.

Heavens! What was the pang that shot across my brain? I gasped for utterance: but still was dumb. A dread so terrible had seized me that there I stood; motionless and stupefied.

The woman who opened the door and directed the men belonged to the house; and, just as the bearers were proceeding with the coffin up stairs, Matthew, the country servant, who had attended Mr.

Evelyn in the dissecting room the first night of our meeting, came in.

The moment he saw me, the poor fellow burst into tears ; and exclaimed—
“ Oh fir !”

His look and the tone of his voice were sufficient. There was but one event that could have produced them, in such an extraordinary and unfeigned degree of grief. My horrible fears were fulfilled.

He paused a moment, sobbed, and again cried in a most piercing and lamentable tone, “ My poor master !”

I must draw the curtain over feelings that I cannot pretend to paint. How long I stood, what I first said, or what my looks were, are things of which I know nothing. I only recollect that my eyes were stone, and had not a tear to shed.

CHAP. XI.

A PROOF OF THE DANGER OF NOT ATTENDING TO TRIFLES. A FEEBLE ATTEMPT TO CHARACTERISE A MAN OF UNCOMMON VIRTUE. THE DYING ANXIETIES OF MR. EVELYN.

THE melancholy particulars of this strange tragedy were that, three days before, Mr. Evelyn, being then in perfect health, had been dissecting a limb in a high state of putrescence. During the operation, the instrument had slipped, and made what he considered only as a scratch of the skin; and so slight that he did not immediately deem it worthy of notice: though, when he had ended, he felt a tingling; and then thought it prudent to wash with vinegar, and bind it up to keep out the air.

He was so busily engaged, during the day, that he paid no more attention to it; though he once or twice felt a throbbing

that was unusual. Being fatigued, and finding his spirits rather agitated, he took a gentle opiate at going to rest : but was waked in the middle of the night, by symptoms of a very alarming kind. The morbid humour that was introduced into the system, small as it probably was in quantity, was so active that Mr. Evelyn was seized with a violent inflammatory fever : so that he was delirious when he woke, and died in less than eight and forty hours after he received this slight wound.

Such is the uncertain fate of man, in this state of ignorance. To such sudden accidents of sickness and death are the good and the bad, the foolish and the wise, continually subject ; and such at present is the frail tenure of life that the man in whose hall we feasted on Monday, or the blooming beauty with whom we sung and danced, ere the week passes away, are descended to the grave.

What tribute can friendship or affection pay, to the memory of a man like this? There is only one that is worthy of his virtues; and that is to record them: that, he being gone, his example may inspire the benevolence he practised; and teach others to communicate the blessings he conferred.

Oh that I had the power to pourtray those virtues in all their lustre! Ages unborn would then rejoice, that such a man had lived; and feel the benefits he would have bestowed. But it is a task that cannot be accomplished in a few pages. His life was a vast volume of the best of actions, which originated in the best of principles. Peace, love, and reverence, be with his memory.

For my own part, if, in addition to that uncommon public worth which he possessed, and that noble scale of morality by which he regulated his life, the personal kindness which he heaped on me be re-

membered, I must have less of affection than savage brutality, did no portion of his spirit inspire me while I speak of these events.

Nor did his friendship end while understanding had the least remaining power. His last act of benevolence was a strenuous but incoherent effort to prevent the mischief which, disturbed as his functions were, he still had recollection enough to apprehend would fall on me.

The reader is informed of the mortgage I gave Mr. Evelyn, when I received not merely a qualification but the possession of an estate; and I imagine he will not think I was too scrupulously careful, to guard and prove the honesty of my intentions, when I further tell him that, for the sums of money which Mr. Evelyn advanced, I insisted on giving my promissory notes for repayment. I was pertinacious, and would accept such favours on no other terms.

This

This mortgage and these notes were lying in the possession of Mr. Evelyn, at the time of his death. He had apprehended no danger, till the fever and the delirium seized him : at the beginning of which he called his servant, Matthew (I tell the story as the poor fellow told it to me), and, giving him a key, bade him go down to his bureau, and search among his papers for a parchment and some notes, that were tied together with red tape.

Having uttered this, he began to talk in a wild and wandering manner ; of fetters, and prisons ; and asked Matthew if he knew why such places were built ? “ So make haste, Matthew,” said he, “ and burn the parchment, and burn the notes, and burn the bureau. After which, you know, all will be safe, Matthew ; and they can never harm Mr. Trevor. You love Mr. Trevor, Matthew : do not you ? ”

His

His recollection then seemed to return ; and he asked, " Of what have I been talking ? Go, Matthew ; seek the parchment and the notes : tied with red tape. Observe : there is no other parchment tied with red tape. Bring them to me directly."

Matthew had taken the key ; but just as he was going the Doctor, who had been sent for, arrived.

Matthew went, however, as he was directed ; and, applying the key to the lock, found it was a wrong one.

The Doctor, alarmed for the state in which he saw Mr. Evelyn, immediately wrote a prescription, and rang for the servant to run and have it prepared at the shop of the next apothecary. Matthew answered the bell ; and Mr. Evelyn seeing him eagerly demanded—
" Where is the parchment ? Have you brought me the parchment ? Why do not you bring me the parchment ?"

" For,"

"For," said Matthew, "I held out the key; and he saw I had nothing else in my hands."

The Doctor asked Matthew what parchment his master wanted? And Matthew replied, he could not tell: except that his master said it was in the bureau, and tied with red tape. "Why do not you bring it?" said Mr. Evelyn. Then turning to the Doctor, added—"It is a bundle of misery; and you know, sir, we ought to drive all misery from the face of the earth. I cannot tell how it came in my possession. Why do you not go and bring it me, Matthew? And pray, sir, do you see it destroyed. Promise me that; I beg you will! Because Mr. Trevor is in the country. I am afraid elections are but bad things. What, sir, is your opinion? For I think I shall die; and he will then have no friend on earth to secure him the poll."

"Seeing my poor master was so disturbed

turbed in his mind," said Matthew, "the doctor *bid* me run as fast as I could for the stuff he had ordered: which I did. But I was obliged to wait till it was made up; and when I *come* back my poor dear master was more distracting light-headed than ever. But still he kept raving about the parchment; and his cousin, Sir Barnard; and you, Mr. Trevor: all which the Doctor said we must not heed, because he did not know what he said. Though, for all that, I could not but mightily fear there was something hung heavy on his mind: for, as long as ever he could be heard to speak, he kept calling every now and then for the parchment. And after that, when he lay heaving for breath and rattling in the throat and nobody could tell a word that he said, he kept moving his lips just in the same manner as when he could make himself heard. I do believe he was calling for it almost as the breath left his

his body. And I cannot but say that I wish I had found it, and brought it to him; for the ease and quiet of his soul."

CHAP. XII.

DOUBTS CONCERNING THE JUSTICE OF WILLS AND TESTAMENTS. THE PROVIDENT CARE OF THE BARONET. A DEMONSTRATION OF HIS ARDENT LOVE FOR HIS COUNTRY. HECTOR LOSES HIS ELECTION. MY DETERMINATION TO ACCEPT THE CHILTERN HUNDREDS.

WHEN a man discovers that the pathos of his story, and the virtues which he has in contemplation, are entirely beyond the power of language, what method can he take but that of leaving off abruptly: that he may suffer the imagination to perform an office to which any other effort is inadequate? As Mr. Evelyn lived so he died. To prevent evil and to do unbounded good was his ruling

ruling passion. It never left him, till life departed.

It is a phenomenon which has frequently been remarked that, in a state of delirium, the mind has its luminous moments: during which it seems to have a more clear and comprehensive view of consequences than in its more sober periods of health. The evil that excited so strong and painful an alarm in the mind of my dying friend was no idle dream. The Baronet was his heir at law. Mr. Evelyn had made no will: for not only was his death premature but, knowing the mischiefs that have arisen from disputes concerning testamentary bequests, he strongly doubted of the morality of making any. It was never his intention to hoard; and, hoping or I might rather say expecting to have a clear prospect of the approach of death, his plan was to distribute all the personal property in his possession before he died, in the manner
that

that he should suppose would be most useful.

However, whether it were a just sense of rectitude or an improper pride of heart, I own that I felt pleased, as far as myself was concerned, that the intentions of Mr. Evelyn, when he called for the parchment, were not executed. I did not indeed foresee all that was to happen : but I felt an abhorrence of being liable to be suspected of I know not what imputed arts, or crimes ; by the aid of which malice or selfishness might assert I had come into the possession of so large a part of Mr. Evelyn's property.

Not that, if the deeds and notes had been destroyed, I should have thought it just to have retained the estate that I held. But my virtue was not fated to be put to this trial. When I met Sir Barnard at the Cocoa tree, he not only knew of the decease of Mr. Evelyn but had ordered seals to be placed on all the locks ; under
which

which it was imagined that papers or effects might be secured. Having heard the story of Matthew, I could have no doubt but that the mortgage deeds, and the notes for sums received, would now fall into the Baronet's power.

It is true I might, if I pleased, bid him defiance. No: I ought not to have said, if I pleased; but, if I could condescend to acknowledge myself a scoundrel. He had made me his own member, and had himself impowered me to avoid the punishment which is assigned by law to unfortunate debtors: for, under this best of governments, such as a representative of the people was now my privilege. This immaculate constitution, to which all the homage that man can pay is insufficient worship, vaunted as it is and revered by all parties, or all parties are broad day liars, for all and each strive to be most loud and extravagant in praise of it, this constitution in its very essence decrees.

decrees that things which are vile and unjust, in one man, are right and lawful, in another.

Well then : by the aid of this constitution, which I too must praise if I would escape whipping, I might seat myself as Sir Barnard's member, and aid to countenance and make laws, to which I and the other wise law-makers my coadjutors should not be subject. I might, however offensive the term may be to certain delicate ears, I might become a privileged swindler ; and rob every man who should do me the injustice to think me honest.

It cannot be supposed that so dear a lover and so ardent an admirer of the constitution, as Sir Barnard was, should once suspect that I would not benefit myself by all its blessings : that is, that I would not cheat him to the very best of my ability. This supposition had induced him, during our conversation at
the

the Cocoa tree, to struggle with and keep down those indignant risings with which, notwithstanding the modulated tone of his voice, I could see he was more than half choaked.

After what I had heard and situated as I was at present, I had very little doubt either of the purity of his patriotism or the manner in which it would affect me. Still however I had some. There might be a change in his politics; but it might neither be of the nature nor of the extent that I feared.

But these doubts did not distress me long. They were entirely removed, by that most authentic source of intelligence the Gazette; in which, about a fortnight after the death of Mr. Evelyn, I read the following unequivocal proof of the Baronet's inordinate love of his country.

“The King has been pleased to grant the dignity of a Baron of the kingdom of
Great

Great Britain to Sir Barnard Bray, Baronet; by the name stile and title of Baron Bray, of Bray hall in the county of Somerset; and to the heirs male of his body, lawfully begotten."

I was now no longer at a loss for the reason of the Baronet's late sudden departure, and the desertion of his political friends at the election. What are friends? What are elections? What is our country, compared to the smiles of a prime minister; and the titles he can bestow? Nothing now was wanting to the honor of the house of Bray! It might in time I own pant after a Dukedom; and a Duke of Bray might as justly be stiled princely and most puissant as many another Duke. But at present it was full with satisfaction.

This court document, brief though it was, spoke volumes. It was a flash of lightning, that gave me a distinct view of the black and dreadful abyss that was
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immediately before me; and into which I foresaw I must be plunged.

On the same day, I read that the Idford candidate had been returned for the county of * * * *; and that consequently Hector had lost his election.

This was not all. Heated by the illiberal practices which always attend such contentions, knowing the bribery that he had used himself, and convinced that he could prove the same corrupt means to have been resorted to by his opponent, he was not satisfied with the devastation he had already committed upon his fortune; but was determined to demand a *scrutiny*: and if he should be foiled in that effort, he was resolved to try the merits of the election before a committee of the house of commons. Such was the report that was immediately propagated; and which was afterward verified by facts.

With respect to myself, convinced as
I was

I was of its danger, I had made my choice. My fixed purpose was to vacate my seat in parliament. It might perhaps be questioned, since the pretended voters had in reality no voice, and their imaginary representative was no more than a person nominated by the new Lord Bray, whether I ought to resign an office which, as I supposed, I should fill for the good of mankind; and give place to some person who, obedient to his leader, would do the reverse?

But one act of baseness cannot authorize another. To bear about me a sense of self-degradation, a certainty that I was sheltering myself from the power of my late patron by a privilege which I considered as highly vicious, a subterfuge such as every man who deserves the name ought to despise and spurn at, this was insufferable. I had lost much: for I had lost hopes that had been extravagant and unbounded in promise: but

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I had not lost a conscious rectitude of heart, without which existence was not to be endured.

CHAP. XIII.

THE COMEDY OF WILMOT SUCCESSFUL. THE WOUNDED STRANGER SEEN AT A DISTANCE. ORATORY ABANDONED WITH REGRET. THE DANGERS THAT ATTEND BEING HONEST. A NEW INVITATION FROM HECTOR. A JOURNEY DEFERRED BY AN ARREST, AND ANOTHER ACCIDENTAL SIGHT OF THE STRANGER.

IT is happy for man that there is scarcely any state of suffering, whether of mind or body, in which pain is unremitting; and wholly unmixed with pleasure. If he be unhappy himself, it will be strange should there be no one more fortunate for whom he has an affection: no friend that is more prosperous, and in whose prosperity he takes delight.

The

The season of the year had arrived when the comedy of Wilmot had been put into rehearsal, and was to be performed. It was a trying occasion ; and those who knew him loved him too well to be absent : though the few intimate friends who had read the piece had no doubt of its success. The partial failure of his tragedy had produced no jealousy of rivalry : though, as its merits had been publicly acknowledged, it had incurred no disgrace. In private life, he was beloved ; and, as a public man, his merits had not yet created him enemies. He has since, indeed, in that respect, not been so fortunate. But he has never thought it just to complain : being convinced that mistake, though it should be rectified, should not be resented.

The evening of representation arrived, the house was crowded, the company brilliant, and the plaudits with which the author was honoured established his re-

putation, and confirmed the judgment of his friends.

During the performance, I sat in the boxes; and, among the spectators in the pit, I discovered a man whose hair was white, whose locks were venerable, and who I was well convinced was the stranger whom I had found wounded at the entrance of Barnes common. I was in a side-box, and he was near the opposite pit door; so that the distance made it rather doubtful: yet the more I looked the more I was convinced it was the same person. The comedy was nearly ended when I first saw him; and I determined, as soon as I had heard the epilogue, to go and satisfy myself how far my persuasion was true.

I went round to the door; but the pit was so crowded that it was with difficulty I could make my way to the seat. When I was there my labour was lost: I could not find him; and, enquiring for him
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by description of the persons near where he sat, they told me that such a gentleman had been there ; but that he complained of the heat, and had left the house immediately after the curtain dropped.

This incident gave me considerable chagrin. However, as his person was very remarkable, and being persuaded he was actually the wounded stranger, I conceived hopes that I should again meet him ; in some place where the danger of losing sight of him would not be so great.

There being no expectation of his return, I went in search of my friends : in company with whom, rejoicing in the success of Wilmot and glorying in the acquisition of poetry and the stage, I wholly forgot myself and my own affairs, and spent one more very delightful evening.

These affairs however were not long to be forgotten. The returns of the elections throughout Great Britain had all

been made, and the new parliament summoned to assemble. It was with infinite and deep regret that I found myself excluded by my own sense of rectitude. I would willingly have taken my seat, had it been only for one night: for I was eagerly desirous of an opportunity to deliver my thoughts, and urge some of those useful truths which may be uttered with more safety there than in less privileged places.

But I was too well acquainted with the customs and forms of the house to hope that this opportunity could now be found. I had no parliamentary friends; no supporters; and there was not the least probability that a youth so wholly unknown should catch the speaker's eye, whose notice so many were ready to solicit.

These things having been duly weighed, I had already applied for the chiltern hundreds and my seat was declared vacated:

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to the great joy of Lord Bray; and his now bosom friend, the Earl of Idford. This joy was the greater because it was an event of which they had not the least expectation. The due forms of law had been observed, the seals had been removed from the locks of my late inestimable friend, his cousin the new peer was in possession of the mortgage and the notes for money received, and he had no conception of any motives that could induce me to an act which must leave me entirely at his mercy.

It cannot however be supposed, as I have already said, that I had any intention to retain the estate; which I had received from Mr. Evelyn as a qualification, and a support. It was now the property of Lord Bray; and obligation to him was a thing that would not admit of a question. I did not therefore wait for any notice from his lordship, or his attorney,

torney, but desired Mr. Hilary to inform him that I was ready at any time to give up the deeds, and receive back the mortgage.

This would have been a trifle. It was not a sacrifice; but a riddance: by which, could it have ended here, I should have regained something of that elasticity of heart which independence only can feel. Here, however, it could not end. I was obliged to instruct Mr. Hilary to add that I was willing to give my own personal security, by bond or in any manner my creditor should please, for money received and interest due: but to acknowledge that I had no immediate means of payment. In other words, that my person was entirely at the disposal of himself and the law. I might have reminded him that more than half of my debt was incurred by *genteel presents* to his craving electors; and that he had informed

formed me that it was a necessary expence : but to this I could not condescend.

The little business which, during his life, Mr. Evelyn had in law Mr. Hilary had always transacted. He had a sincere regard for me, and a reverence for the memory of his late kinsman ; whose earnest recommendation of me he did not forget. Being well acquainted with the character of Lord Bray, he foresaw and warned me of my danger. While a baronet, to behold himself a peer had been his lordship's darling passion : but that was now gratified ; and, as he was proud, he was likewise revengeful. In this case, however, to warn was useless. I had no alternative, except by means that were dishonorable.

Nor was the resentment of Lord Bray single, or so much to be apprehended as that of the Earl, with whom he had entered into strict alliance. My behaviour

to Lord Idford had uniformly been what he deemed so very insolent that his antipathy may be said to have taken birth at my first act of disobedience: my refusal to dine at the second table. Since then, as he conceived, it had been progressive in aggravation. My scorn of his selfish politics, my attempt to continue the Letters of Themistocles, and write him who was the supposed author of them into disgrace, the pamphlet of which I was the author, the activity with which I had canvassed in favour of Mowbray, and to sum up all my daring to rival him with the woman on whom he would have conferred his person, his dignity, and his other great qualities, were all of them injuries that rankled at his heart. When these things are remembered, few will feel surprised that the Earl should indulge a passion which is in itself so active: or that he should induce Lord Bray to pursue that kind of conduct

to

to which he was already so much disposed.

The danger however must be faced; and Mr. Hilary wrote, as my attorney, to state the circumstances above recited. A week elapsed before he received an answer: but at the end of that time his lordship's attorney replied, that personal security for so large a sum could not be accepted: my bond would be no better than the notes I had given: and that I was required immediately to pay what was due, to the estate and heirs of the late Mr. Evelyn.

The spirit in which this note was written proved the temper of my creditor; and an incident soon occurred by which his propensity to persecute was called into action. The scrutiny which Hector had demanded was over, and decided against him: but, understanding that there was an absolute breach between me and Lord Bray, Mowbray

was convinced that he had accused me falsely. As he was almost certain that he could prove bribery and corruption to have been practised by his opponent, he persisted in determining to bring it before the house of commons. This business kept him still in the country, where he and his partisans were busily collecting information.

He had experienced my utility in the course of the election, he wished to enjoy the same advantage at present, and he and his committee likewise discovered that my evidence was essentially necessary. He therefore wrote me an apology, spoke in the handsomest terms he could recollect of the services I had done him, requested me to come down once more to aid him in his present attempt, and stated the points on which my future testimony would be useful. He further informed me that a gentleman of the law, whom he named, was to set off the morning

ing after I should receive the letter, at ten o'clock, and come post; and that he should be much obliged to me if I would take a seat in the same chaise.

The letter was read in the committee room, as a matter of business; and in this committee room Lord Idford had a secret agent, from whom he gained intelligence of all their proceedings that deserved notice.

Desirous as I was of obliging the brother of Olivia, I made no hesitation to comply. The evening before I was to go down into * * * * *, I went to Mr. Hilary; to acquaint him with the place of my destination, and the manner in which he might direct to me, if any thing new should occur. The agents of Lord Bray, or to speak more truly of the Earl, had been exceedingly industrious; and a writ was already procured. It was intended to take me as I stepped into the chaise, or that evening if possible, and
accord-

accordingly the door where I lived was watched, and I was seen to come out. My usual pace was brisk, but I happened now to be in haste ; and, as they told me themselves, the setters lost sight of me for some time, were afterward cautious of coming up to me in any public street where a rescue was probable, and followed me till I came almost to the door of Mr. Hilary.

Here there was a carriage standing ; and, to my great surprise and joy, I saw Mr. Hilary with a light, conducting out the very person whom I had some time before discovered in the pit, and whom I now knew to be the wounded stranger.

I hesitated whether I ought to spring forward, and intrude my enquiries immediately upon him, or make them of Mr. Hilary, with whom it appeared he was acquainted ; and, at this instant, the bailiff and his two men came up with me, and told me I was their prisoner.

While

While I stood astonished at this sudden and at that precise time unexpected event, the carriage with the stranger in it drove away; and Mr. Hilary shut the door without seeing me.

There is a sense of indignity and disgrace in being arrested, at which all those who have not been frequently subjected to it revolt. I was wholly ignorant of the manners of the people who had laid their hands upon me. I had heard of giving bail: but I had likewise heard that it was a thing of danger, to which men were generally averse; and I had a bitter repugnance to ask any thing which I thought it was likely should be refused. Neither had I any probable person to ask: for my little law reading had taught me that the sureties of a debtor must be house-keepers.

Unwilling therefore to trouble Mr. Hilary, and finding myself without resource,

source, I desired the bailiff to take me wherever he pleased, or wherever the law directed. "I suppose, Sir, you do not mean we should take you to jail?" said the bailiff.

Ignorant as I was and surprised at the question, I asked where else they meant to take me? He replied "To my house, Sir: or to any other lock up house that you choose."

"A lock up house, Sir!" said I. "Pray what is that?"

The bailiff knew not how to give a direct answer; but replied "There is some lock up houses at which a gentleman may be treated like a gentleman: though I cannot say but there is others that is shabby enough. I see very well, Sir, you are a young gentleman, and do not know the trim of such things: so, if you please to go to my house, you will find very civil usage. I can tell by your cut,

cut, Sir, that you are no scrub; so my wife will take care to furnish you with every thing that is genteel and polite."

The man smelled excessively of brandy and tobacco; which, corresponding with his gait, looks, and language, seemed an introduction to the purgatory to which I was doomed. I thought proper however to accept his offer, and go to the house where I was to be treated with so much politeness and gentility.

CHAP. XIV.

THE GOOD BREEDING OF A BAILIFF. A PERIOD
OF DEJECTION. A VISIT FROM MR. HILARY.
THE HOPES HE CONCEIVES.

THE bailiff and one of his followers walked beside me, cautiously keeping in advance; and the other marched behind till we came to a stand of coaches, and I

was asked whether one of them should be called? I was thoroughly ashamed of my company: but a deep sense of indignity confuses thought; and, till it was proposed by the bailiff, I had forgotten that there was such a thing as a coach. His proposal was immediately accepted; and we were driven through Lincoln's-inn-fields into Carey-street, where we were obliged to alight and pass through several narrow allies.

I had no great expectations of the gentility of the bailiff's abode: but, slender as they were, the few I had were disappointed. I was wholly unused to such places: this I suspect was one of the meanest of them; and the approach to the house, as well as all that was in it, bespoke wretchedness, and inspired disgust.

As soon as we entered the doors, the bailiff called aloud for Charlotte (the name of his wife) and desired her to bring light into the drawing room.

“ Why

"Why what do you talk of, George?" replied Charlotte. "Are you drunk? Don't you know the gentleman is there that you brought in this morning?"

"Do you think I don't know what I am about?" answered George. "I have brought another gentleman: so that there gentleman must come down, and *boik* into the best parlour."

"I am sure," retorted Charlotte with great vivacity and significance, "he has behaved vastly proper, since he came into my house. He has had friends with him all afternoon; and dined, and called for wine, and done every thing that was genteel."

Though half in a trance, I was sufficiently awake to understand her meaning. I therefore interrupted the bailiff, who had begun to reply with passion.

"You are very right, Madam;" said I.

"The gentleman must not be disturbed.

I have

I have no friends that drink wine ; and I drink none myself."

This hint was quite sufficient. Neither the drawing room nor the best parlour were now to be had ; and I was shewn into a dirty back place, which was little more than a closet, decorated with a wooden cut of Lord Lovat over the mantle piece, and corresponding pictures of the king and queen on each side.

Before she shut the door, Charlotte demanded " if I chose to have some more coals on the fire ? And whether I would have two candles or one ? " " Whatever you please madam," I replied. " Nay, fir," said she pertly, " that is just as you please." I made no answer, and she shut the door with a dissatisfied air ; which she locked on the outside.

At any other time, this George and Charlotte, with their drawing-room, would have

have presented many whimsical associations to my mind : but at present my attention was called to the iron bars of the one window of my prison hole ; and to the recollection that, in all probability, I was now shut up for life. The weight of evil was so oppressive that I sat motionless, in sullen stupefaction, for a considerable time.

Hearing no sound whatever, the bailiff I suppose was alarmed : for he unlocked the door, and coming in abruptly exclaimed " Oh ! I thought it could not be ! " Meaning probably that I could not possibly have escaped through the window. Recollecting himself, he asked " if I did not think proper to send to some friends ? " To which I laconically answered, " No."

" But I suppose you mean to give bail, sir ? "

" I have none to give."

" I perceive how it is, sir. You are not

not used to the business; and so you are cast down. You must bethink yourself: for I dare say a young gentleman like you will find bail fast enough; *because* why, the sum is not quite four hundred and forty pounds. We have people enough *which* will go of any message for you; so I would advise you to send, though it is late; *because*, as you *says* you don't drink, there will be no good much in your staying here. Not but what we have as good beds, and as good wines and all sorts of liquors, and can get any thing else as good as a gentleman needs lick his lips to. There *is* never *no* complaints at our house. So you had better take my advice, and cheer up your spirits; and get a little something good in your belly, in the way of eating and drinking; and send to let your friends know as how you are *nabbed*: *because* nothing can come of it otherwise, neither to you nor *nobody* else."

His

His discourse awakened me enough to remind me of the necessity of sending to the gentleman, with whom I had intended to travel the next day, and inform him of the impossibility of my taking the journey. This led me to reflect further. The remark of the bailiff was just : delay was prejudicial. What had happened could not be kept secret, secrecy was in itself vicious, and to increase evil by procrastination was cowardly. Thus far roused, I presently conceived and determined on my plan. I saw no probability of avoiding a prison : but, being in this house, I was resolved first to see my friends. I had already sold my horses, and discharged my servant. Clarke, I knew, would reproach me, if I did not accept his good offices in my distress ; when such good offices as he could perform would be most necessary. I intended therefore to request him the next morning to go round and inform such of
my

my friends as I wished to see : but, as the bailiff told me it would be proper to send for my attorney immediately, I thought proper to dispatch a messenger ; with one note to him, and another to the gentleman with whom I was to have travelled.

Mr. Hilary was at home and came instantly on the receipt of my billet. When he saw me, he endeavoured to smile ; and not appear in the least surprised, or affected. But his feelings betrayed him ; the tears started into his eyes, and he was obliged to turn away his face. He made an effort, however, and recovered himself : after which, he rather endeavoured to enter into easy conversation than to talk of business. By this I suspected that he neither durst trust himself nor me ; till a little time should have reconciled us to the scene.

This was a proper opportunity for enquiries which my sudden misfortune had not made me forget. I questioned him concerning

concerning the stranger, whose person I described; and mentioned my having seen Mr. Hilary light him out of the house, the moment before I was arrested.

"What do you know of him?" said Mr. Hilary, with an eager air. "Have you ever seen him before?"

"Yes; if I am not very much mistaken."

"Nay but tell me, what do you know?"

"First answer me concerning who and what he is?"

"A gentleman of large fortune, the last of his family, and a great traveller."

"Has he met with any accident lately?"

"Yes. But why do you ask?"

"And why do you seem so much awakened by the question?"

"Because he is excessively desirous of discovering some gentleman, who found him after he had been robbed, and left,

supposed to be dead; that he may if possible reward his preserver. Now there are some circumstances, as related by the people of an inn to which he was taken, that have suggested a thought to me which, should it prove true, would give me inexpressible pleasure."

"What are they?"

"That the good Samaritan, who performed this act of humanity, was a young gentleman with a servant out of livery; that he and his man rode two blood horses, both bright bays; that the servant's name was Samuel; and that the master was in person very like you. All which correspond; and I really believe, by your smiling, that it actually was you."

"Suppose it: what then?"

"Why then I am sure you have gained a friend, who will never suffer you to go to prison."

The word friend conjured up a train of ideas,

ideas, which almost overcame me. "I have lost a friend," said I, "who would not have suffered me to go to prison. But he is gone. I accepted even *his* favours with an aching and unwilling heart; and prison itself will not, I suspect, be so painful to me as more obligations of the same kind, and conferred by a person who, though I am strongly prepossessed in his favour, I scarcely can hope should equal Mr. Evelyn. And, if he even did, an extravagant supposition, I should still hesitate: I doubt if a prison itself be so hateful as a knowledge that I am only out of one on sufferance; and that, when any caprice shall seize my creditor, I may be hunted like a ferocious beast; and commanded to my den, like a crouching cur.

Mr. Hilary endeavoured to combat this train of thinking: but it was not to be conquered. The short period of trial since the death of Mr. Evelyn had af-

fording me too many proofs of the painful sensations which such a knowledge can excite ; and of the propensity which I had to give them encouragement. To be as I have said the slave of any man's temper, not as an effort of duty but from a sense of fear, was insufferable. A prison, locks, bolts, and bread and water, were to be preferred.

Mr. Hilary sat with me till bed time ; and, not only to put the bailiff in good humour, but to cheer my heart and his own, ordered supper, and drank more plentifully of wine than was his custom : urging me to follow his example. I did not refuse : for I had a contempt for any thing that had the appearance of an incapacity to endure whatever the tyranny of rancorous men and unjust laws could inflict. The stranger, he told me, was gone down into the country ; from whence he would return within a week : but he forbore to mention his name, as he had

had been instructed; the stranger having enquiries to make, which induced him to keep it secret.

Before he left me, Mr. Hilary received instructions from me to be given to Clarke: after which we quitted the best parlour, into which we had been introduced with great ceremony to sup; and I retired to try how soundly I could sleep, in one of the good beds of a lock-up house.

CHAP. XV.

MORNING VISITORS. A GENEROUS PROPOSAL REJECTED. THE AFFECTIONATE FRIENDSHIP OF MISS WILMOT. A VERY UNEXPECTED VISITOR. HIS EXTRAORDINARY CONDUCT, AND A SCENE OF RECONCILIATION. A LETTER WHICH EXCITES DELIGHTFUL SENSATIONS.

THE morning came, the diligence of Mr. Hilary was that of a friend, and the best parlour was soon filled: the reader will easily guess by whom. There is an undescribable pleasure, when we are per-

secuted by one set of human beings, to receive marks of affection from another. It is a strong consolation to know that kindness and justice have not wholly forsaken the earth.

Wilmot, Clarke, and Turl were with me. I called for breakfast; and felt a gratification at enjoying another social meal, before being immured in I knew not what kind of dungeon. Charlotte and her maid, Pol, were very alert; and I believe she almost repented that I was not in the drawing-room, since she found I had so many friends.

Clarke was asked to partake; but answered with a "no thank you, Mr. Trevor." I supposed it was awkward bashfulness. I did him wrong. He had a more refined and feeling motive: for, when I pressed him very earnestly, he replied—"At another time, Mr. Trevor, such a favour would make me happy; and you know I have not refused: but, just now,

now, why it would look as if, because you are under misfortunes, I might take liberties."

Honest-hearted generous fellow! He was still the same. But he breakfasted with us. Be assured, good reader, he breakfasted with us.

And now I had a contest to undergo, which was maintained with so much obstinacy that it became truly painful. Wilmot, in consequence of the success of his comedy, had the power to discharge my debt; and on this at first he peremptorily insisted. But it was what I could not accept. He was, I knew, an Evelyn in soul: but I too panted to be something. I could not endure to rob him of the labour of a life, and walk at large oppressed by the consciousness of impotence: of a depressed and sunken spirit; of which groveling meanness would be the chief feature. Such at least

I 4 were

were my sensations : and they were too impetuous to be overcome.

In the ardour we mutually felt, Turl was appealed to by both. At first he strongly inclined to the side of Wilmot : but, hearing my reasons and perceiving the anguish which the proposal gave, he at length said—" Let us pause awhile. We are friends. Imprisonment is a detestable thing ; and there is no danger that, as friends, we should suffer each other to endure it long, if there should be any possible and honest means of imparting freedom. We need make no professions. In one part of his argument, Mr. Trevor is undoubtedly right. If he can relieve himself, by his abilities and industry, which he is persuaded he can, it is his duty. For it will not only increase his immediate happiness, but it will give confidence to his efforts, and strength to his mind : qualities that are inestimable.

Impe-

Impediments serve but to rouse the man of genius. To reject aid from a sentiment of haughtiness is a vice: but to despair of our own resources is the death of all true greatness of character. In any case, suspend your contest; in which, though from the best of motives, you are both too warm. Examine your arguments at leisure. If Mr. Trevor can be rendered most happy and useful by accepting your offer, it will then be just in him to cede. but remember once more we are friends, that know each other's worth; and it will be just that I should partake in his release. To this I know you will both joyfully consent. If good can be done, you will not deny me my share!"

It was characteristic of Turl never to speak on serious occasions without leaving a deep impression on his hearers. Wilmot heaved a profound sigh, but was silent.

Having thus far prevailed, I was desirous of being immediately removed to prison : but to this they both vehemently objected. It had an air of ostentation : of affecting to love misery for misery's sake. Time ought to be taken for consideration ; and evil should not be sported with, though when unavoidable it ought to be endured with fortitude.

While these debates took place, it was no uninteresting spectacle to contemplate the changes in the countenance of Clarke. Before the adventure of Bath, he had risen much above the level of his companions : but now, when he saw a man willing to part with all he possessed to rescue another from prison, and heard strong reasons why it was probable the offer ought not to be accepted, his feelings were all in arms. His passions, while Wilmot pleaded, were ready to break their bounds ; and, when he listened to the answers that were returned, his mind was filled and expanded.

expanded. He discovered that there is a disinterested grandeur in morality, of which he had no previous conception. He was in a new world; and a dark room, with barred windows, was heaven in all its splendor.

Having agreed to follow their advice, Wilmot and Turl left me; with a promise to return early in the evening: but poor Clarke said "he had no heart for work that day; and he could not abide to leave me shut up by myself. He saw plainly enough I had true friends; such as would never forsake me: and no more would he, though he could do me no good." When however I represented to him my wish to be alone, that I might consider on my situation, and requested he would dine with his family, and bring some books from my lodgings in the evening, he complied.

The morning of the day was chiefly consumed; and I was not suffered long

to remain alone. I had scarcely dined before a coach stopped at the door, and Charlotte came in with demure significance in her face. "There is a young lady, sir," said she, "*which* says her name is Wilmot, *which* wants to see you."

At this moment, she was the most agreeable visitor, that could have arrived. Her heart was full, her eyes were swollen, and red with weeping, and, as soon as she entered the room, she again burst into tears.

It has often been asked why sorrows like these should excite so much gratification? The answer is evident. They are not only tokens of personal respect and affection, but they are proofs that injustice cannot be committed without being perceptibly and often deeply felt by others, as well as by those on whom it is exercised.

When she had appeased her feelings sufficiently to be able to speak, I found that,

that, like her brother, she was come with a disinterested plan for my relief. She began by blaming herself for not having strenuously enough opposed my forbearance with respect to Wakefield; and pleaded with great energy of feeling to persuade me immediately to do myself right. I took the first favourable opportunity to interrupt her; and enquired if she had seen or heard any thing of Wakefield since the letter he wrote? She answered, he had been with her above an hour that very morning.

“In what temper of mind was he?”

“Extremely exasperated.”

“Not at you?”

“Oh no : at Lord Bray: at your persecutors : at the world in general. He says you are not fit to live in it : you are no match for it. You have been persuading him, contrary to all history and experience, that men are capable of virtue and happiness. In short, he owns that

that he was more than half convinced : but that he believes he shall be obliged to relapse into his former opinions."

"I have persuaded him?"

"So he says."

"When? Where?"

"I cannot tell. I thought from his discourse that he had met with you."

While we were engaged in this conversation, Charlotte again entered; and told me there was a gentleman of the name of Wakefield, who desired to see me. "Is it possible?" exclaimed Miss Wilmot.

The door opened, and he appeared.

"Belmont!" cried I, with surprise.

"Why did you announce yourself by the name of Wakefield?"

He stretched out his hand to me, and turned his face aside: then recovering himself replied "The farce is over."

"What do you mean?"

"That I suppose you will despise me.

But

But do, if you please : for, though I love you, I too despise to fear you. I have done you various wrongs. My name is Wakefield. I have been one of the infernal instruments to bring you here : but I am come to make you all the atonement in my power, and take you out. Forgive me only so far as not to insult me, by repeating your contempt of that villain Wakefield. It is a damned undigestible term : but I deserved it ; and you applied it to me without intending an affront. I know you are as brave as you are generous. Till I met with you, I thought myself the first man in the world : but, notwithstanding my evasive raillery, I felt your hand upon me. I sunk under you. There was something in you that excited my envy, at first ; and afterward, perhaps, a better passion. What damned accidents they were that made me what I have been I cannot tell. I know not what I shall be : but I know
what

what I am. I disdain penitential promises. If you will be my friend, here is my hand. Good fortune or bad, we will share it together."

Thus invited, could I refrain? Oh no. I cannot describe the scene that passed. We did not embrace, for we were no actors; and, as our passions for a time were too big for utterance, we were silent.

Miss Wilmot at length looked up; and, while the tears were streaming down her cheeks, her countenance assumed an expression infinitely beyond smiling, though something like it, while she exclaimed—"This is a happy day!"

Her eye first met mine, and then Wakefield's. He instantly hung his head, and said—"Lydia! When we were alone, I could just endure to look at you: but now I cannot. Yet I am an ass. What is done is done. The affections that I have are yours: but
I must

I must not, no nor I will not be afraid, even of my own thoughts. I know I have nothing to fear from you. Man is a strange animal; and may be many things in the course of a short life."

Wakefield then rang the bell, and desired the bailiff would send immediately to Lord Bray's attorney; that my debts might be settled, and I released; and to call, as he knew they must for form's sake, and see that there were no more detainers.

Hearing him give these directions, I could not but ask his meaning? "What," replied he, with generous indignation, "do you suppose that I am come to cant about virtue? That, at least, is a vice of which you have never yet found me guilty. I am here to pay your debts, with money in my possession. Whether, in a court of law, it would be proved to be yours or mine I neither know nor care. But there is something better that
I do

I do know : which is that, if I were in your place and you in mine, you would not long let me remain in a house like this. With respect to the future, I am partly persuaded we shall neither of us act the miser."

Miss Wilmot again exclaimed—"This is a happy day !"

Wakefield was impatient to see me released ; and was well acquainted with bailiffs. " If you are expeditious," said he to George, " you will have a guinea for your industry. If you are dilatory, not a farthing more than your fees."

The promised guinea gave the messenger wings ; and in less than an hour the debt was discharged, and a receipt in full delivered.

Just as this account was closed, another messenger came from a different quarter. The anxiety of Miss Wilmot had induced her to take a bold step. In the first emotions of grief, she wrote to Olivia ;

via; and informed her of every circumstance, as well as of the place of my detention. This information produced the following letter, and the bills inclosed; as mentioned in its contents.

“ I have no words to speak my feelings. I have never yet had an opportunity, since I thought the love I bear you justifiable, to declare them. This is the time. To be silent now would argue a distrust of you, which would degrade me; and render me unworthy both of you and the dignified virtues by which your conduct is guided. Every new fact that I hear of you does but increase that affection; which I find ennobled by being so worthily placed. After the proofs you have so repeatedly given, it would be cowardice and hypocrisy to say less.

“ I inclose you five hundred pounds. They are my own. I would sooner even see you suffer than be guilty of an action which I know you could not approve.

They

They are what I have reserved, from money allowed me, to be employed on any urgent occasion. Surely there can be few more urgent than the present. Your refusal of them would wound me to the soul. It would break my heart. I need not add any thing more.

“OLIVIA MOWBRAY.”

Who will tell me that virtue is not its own reward ? Who will affirm that to conquer selfish desires, to render the passions subservient to reason, and to make those principles we commend in others rules for ourselves, is not the way to be happy ? The tide of joy was full to overflowing ! And yet, when I recollected that, though no longer a prisoner it was denied me to obey the yearnings of my heart and pass the threshold of Olivia, how suddenly did it ebb !

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

A JOURNEY TO AID HECTOR ONCE MORE PROJECTED. AN INTERVIEW WITH THE WOUNDED STRANGER. A DISCOVERY OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.

I SHALL forbear to repeat the joy and congratulations of friends, with other less events; and hasten to one which gave a more surprising turn to my affairs than even any that I had yet experienced. The morning after my release, it was my intention to go down into the county of * * * *: agreeable to the desire of Hector. Of this I informed Mr. Hilary, the evening before: but, as I was become very cautious in money matters, I meant to go by the coach.

When he heard this, Mr. Hilary smiled: and told me, if I would go post, he believed he could find me a companion, who would willingly bear half the expence.

I enquired who ? and found it was no other than the stranger. He had been down into Cambridgeshire, to settle some affairs ; and was now preparing for a journey into my native county, for purposes which he will himself presently explain. A proposal more agreeable than this could not have been made to me ; and it was agreed that we should meet and breakfast with Mr. Hilary. When I made the appointment, Mr. Hilary pressed me with unusual earnestness not to be induced to break it, by any accident whatever.

The morning came, I was punctual, and the stranger was there. He had slept at the house of Mr. Hilary. " This, fir," said the latter, presenting me, " is the young gentleman of whose acquaintance you are so very desirous."

The stranger regarded me earnestly ; and, with great emotion in his countenance, asked—" Are you, fir, the humane

mane person, who found me almost expiring ; and by whose care I am now among the living ?”

“ I hope, sir, you do not think there was any thing extraordinary in what I did ?”

“ I wish I had not reason so to think. How many there are who, from mean and selfish motives, would have passed me I cannot say : but there are few indeed that would have discharged the office you undertook with so much unaffected and generous benevolence. I am in your debt, sir, not only for my recovery, for which I can never repay you, but literally for money expended. I shall forbear thanks, for I have none that are adequate ; but suffer me to rid myself of petty obligations.”

“ I understand, sir, that you are rich, and I am not. I therefore inform you, without hesitation, I left twenty pounds with the physician.”

“ You

“ You may well suppose that I returned, after my recovery, to enquire for my preserver. I was then informed of your whole proceedings; and of the anxiety with which, after your journey, you came to complete the charitable office you had begun. And I own, sir, that I was so desirous of seeing a person who, in the very fervour of youth, could act and feel as you have done that, one excepted, you are the man on earth I am most happy to meet.”

“ Mr. Hilary tells me that we are to be travelling companions.”

“ Most willingly. I have long been a wanderer, and am lately returned to end my days in my native land. During my absence, the elder branches of my family are all deceased. I brought back with me more than sufficient for my own wants: but their property has descended to me, and I now very unexpectedly find myself wealthy.”

“ And

“And have you no descendants, sir?”

“None. I am at present in search of a distant relation: whom if I should find, and find him such as my present hopes and past knowledge have pictured him, I shall be one of the happiest of men. To make this and another enquiry is the purpose of the journey I now mean to take. When I left England, I had no intention ever to return: I therefore resolved to hold no correspondence with the persons whom I had left; that I might not revive the memory of scenes and events which had been full of anguish. By accident, about eighteen months ago, being then at Grand Cairo I was informed that a person of my family had long been dead. This determined me to settle my concerns abroad, and revisit my native country. As however my informer spoke only from report, I am desirous, before I make myself known, to verify this fact. I have my reasons; which, from what I have said,

you may suspect to be those of resentment. But not so ; they are only what I conceive to be necessary precautions. Acrimony and anger have long since died away ; and I have but too much cause to condemn those actions of my life in which they were indulged. The relation, whom I hope to find, I may unfortunately discover to be more likely to misuse the wealth, that has devolved to me by the death of the elder branches of my family, than to make it a blessing to himself and others. It is true he is not my heir at law. I have no heir : what I possess is at my own disposal. But he was once my greatest favourite : and I would avoid any action that should excite hopes which it might be weakness and vice in me to gratify."

This short narrative was not merely delivered with a serious air ; but it was accompanied with somewhat of a plaintive tone, that rendered the venerable stranger unusually interesting. It like-
wife

wife excited various wild yet not impossible conjectures in my mind, which made me very eager to pursue the discourse. Mr. Hilary, whose mind had been full of conjectures mingled with doubt, had not informed him of my name.

"Is the person," said I, "in search of whom you mean to take this journey young, or old?"

"About four and twenty. He was the son of my wife's sister; therefore my relation only by marriage. He was certainly the most extraordinary child I ever beheld. I cannot recollect him but with inconceivable emotions of affection. Of all the sportive little creatures I ever met with, he was the most active, the most undaunted, and the most winning. Heaven bless the sweet boy! He was my delight. My eyes overflow whenever I recall to mind the feats of his childhood, which can never be long forgotten by me. My wife and her sister had been at variance, and the first time I saw him was at

a fair; when he was not five years old. I found him placed on a table, where he stood reading the newspaper to country farmers; who were collected round him, and hearing him with astonishment. They seemed to doubt if he could possibly be a child, born of a woman; and were more inclined to think him a supernatural being. His flaxen curly hair, his intelligent eyes, his rosy cheeks, his strong and proportioned limbs, and his cheerful animated countenance, rendered him the most beautiful and most endearing of human creatures. The discriminating sensibility which he displayed was enchanting. Oh should he be living, should I find him, and should he be at present all that his infancy promised, God of heaven and earth! I should expire. The pleasure would be too mighty for my years. But, should I survive it, I should once again before I die feel the animating fervor of youth.

I listened

I listened in amazement. I was not then acquainted with all the incidents of my childhood so perfectly as, by hearing them repeated, I since have been : but I knew enough of them to be persuaded the discourse that I had heard could relate only to me. I paused. I gazed. My eyes were riveted upon the narrator. At length I exclaimed—"What I have just heard, sir, has excited very strange ideas. They seem almost impossible : and yet I am persuaded they are true. Pardon a question which I cannot refrain to ask. Surely I cannot be mistaken ! Your name is Elford ?"

"Sir !"

"You are my——"

"Speak ! Go on ! What am I ?"

"My uncle !"

"Heavens ! Mr. Trevor ! Is that your name ?"

"It is."

"Oh ! God ! Oh ! God ! Oh ! God !

—Hugh ! Little Hugh ! My boy ! My sweet boy !”

Mr. Elford was almost overcome. In a moment he again cried—“ My saviour too ! Still the same ! Courageous, humane, generous ! All that my soul could desire ! Oh shield me, deliver me from this excess of joy !”

CHAP. XVII.

THE CONCLUSION.

ONE event only excepted, little remains to be told of my story ; and that one is doubtless anticipated by the imagination of the reader. To describe the enquiries that passed between me and my uncle, the various fortunes we had encountered, and the feelings they excited, would be to write his history and tediously repeat my own. My difficulties now disappeared. I was the acknowledged heir of a man of great wealth : therefore, I myself am become a great man. Heaven preserve me

me from becoming indolent, proud, and oppressive ! I have not yet forgotten that oppression exists, that pride is its chief counsellor, that activity and usefulness are the sacred duties of both rich and poor, that the wealth entrusted to my distribution is the property of those whom most it can benefit, that I am a creature of very few wants, but that those few in others as well as in myself are imperious, and that I have felt them in all their rigour. Neither have I yet shut my doors on one of my former friends. But I am comparatively young in prosperity. How long I shall be able to persevere in this eccentric conduct time must tell. At present I must proceed, and mention the few remaining circumstances with which the reader may wish to be acquainted.

After my uncle had heard me describe Olivia, and mention the motives which induced me to wish to aid her brother, he immediately determined on taking the journey we had before proposed. We

neither

neither of us wished to separate. Robust in "a green old age," he had no fear of fatigue from travelling this distance; and it would be a pleasure to revisit, in my company, scenes which would bring my former sports and pranks to his recollection. He heard from me a confirmation of the death of Mrs. Elford; and heard it with the same tokens of melancholy in his face which he had betrayed, when he spoke of her himself.

That I should have wished before I took this journey, short as it was, to have seen Olivia, related all my good fortune and partaken in the pleasure it would excite in her, may well be imagined: but forms, and delicacies, and I know not what habitual feelings, forbad me the enjoyment of this premature bliss. I wrote however, and not only to her but to those tried and invaluable friends who were not to be neglected.

We found Hector in a lamentable state. Instead of the bluff robust form, which

which but shortly before he had worn, his limbs were shrunk, his cheeks formerly of a high red were wan and hollow, his voice was gone, his lungs were affected, and his cough was incessant. He had himself at last begun to think his life in danger; and was preparing to return to town for advice: consequently our stay was short. His reception of me however was friendly. The increasing debility which he felt softened his manners; and, when he understood the good fortune that had befallen me, he seemed sincerely to rejoice.

And now let me request the reader to call to mind, not only my first emotions of love for Olivia, and the violence of the passion that preyed upon me while struggling between hope and despair, but those late testimonies of affection, such as a mind so dignified as hers could bestow; and then let him imagine what our meeting must be. Should he expect me to describe her, such as she was

and is, in all her attractions, all her beauties, and all her various excellence; he expects an impossible task. To be beloved by her, to be found worthy of her, and to call her mine, are blessings that infinitely exceed momentary rapture: they are lasting and indubitable happiness.

I know not if it will give him pleasure to be told that, could I have delighted in revenge, I might have satiated myself with that unworthy and destructive passion. The committee, appointed to decide on the election, voted the Idford candidate guilty of bribery and corruption. The fortune of the Earl, like that of Hector, has suffered depredations which half a century will probably not repair. The new made peer and his party daily became so obnoxious to the nation, by the destructive tendency of their measures, that they were and continue to be haunted by terrors that deprive them of the faculties common to man. My heart
bears

bears witness for me that I do not speak this in triumph. I should be no less vicious than unworthy, could I triumph in the misfortunes of any human being : but I were a wretch indeed, were I to make mistakes that are the scourge of mankind a subject of exultation.

Must I repeat more names? Is it necessary to say the virtues of Turl and Wilmot are too splendid to need my praise : or that my social hours are most beneficially and delightfully spent in their society? That I have amply provided for the generous minded Clarke? That Philip is once more the good and faithful servant of a kind mistress? That Mary and her son are equally objects of my attention? And that I do not mean to boast of these things as acts of munificence : but as the performance of duties?

This were unnecessary. Neither shall I be required to particularize the present happiness of Lydia, now Mrs. Wakefield; and of that man of brilliant and astonish-

ing faculties who is her affectionate companion and friend, and from whose exertions, if I am not strangely mistaken, the world has so much to profit and so much to expect. Like me, he is in the enjoyment of affluence ; and he enjoys it with a liberal and munificent spirit. Are there any who hate him, because he once was guilty of hateful crimes ? I hope not. It is a spirit that would sweep away half the inhabitants of the "peopled earth." For my own part, I delight in his conversation, am enlivened by his wit, and prompted to enquiry by the acuteness of his remarks. He is a man whom I am proud to say I love.

I have told my tale. If it should afford instruction, if it should inspire a love of virtue, briefly, if it should contribute to the happiness of mankind, I shall have gained my purpose. My labours will be most richly rewarded.

THE END.